

RECENT LANDMARKS: AN ANALYSIS OF VANCOUVER'S PROGRAM FOR  
COMMEMORATING MODERN ARCHITECTURE

by

ANDREA LYNNE WICKHAM

B.A., The University of British Columbia, 1994

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(School of Community and Regional Planning)

We accept this thesis as conforming  
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

April 2000

© Andrea Lynne Wickham, 2000

## Special Collections - Thesis Authorisation Form

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying of publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of Community + Regional Planning  
The University of British Columbia  
Vancouver, Canada

Date 4.28.2000

## Abstract

The City of Vancouver has led North American cities in commemorating Modern heritage. In 1990, City of Vancouver planners initiated the Recent Landmarks study, thus launching a progressive, specialized program aimed at documenting and conserving the city's post-war architecture. While this program has raised awareness and catalogued a large stock of Modern resources, few of the identified buildings have been protected with legal heritage designation. Thus it seemed appropriate to explore Vancouver's Recent Landmarks program in this thesis and assemble comparative information (from other jurisdictions) against which to measure it.

Thus the primary purpose of this thesis is to point to contemporary heritage conservation initiatives and programs in North America that are specifically concerned with twentieth-century buildings, in order to inform heritage planning in Vancouver. The secondary purpose is to amplify current efforts to broaden and redefine the notion of structural heritage to include twentieth-century work.

This thesis surveyed representatives (i.e. civic planning or cultural/landmark Department staff, and representatives of local chapters of DOCOMOMO, the international organization formed to document and conserve the works of the Modern movement) in Toronto, Victoria, New York, Los Angeles, and Phoenix.

The results of the thesis show that by 1999, all but one of the five surveyed North American municipalities had addressed the issue of Modern heritage. However none of the consulted cities had developed distinct programs to address this resource. For example, while several cities reported listing Modern buildings on their heritage inventories, none of the municipalities canvassed reported the development of studies or inventories that were focused on post-war landmarks.

Thus from this information, it appears that the Recent Landmarks initiative in Vancouver remains quite exceptional. This program has identified several (and spurred the designation of some) significant Modern buildings, stimulated the creation of reports and studies, and made strong attempts to engage the public. In sum, the results gleaned from this thesis survey show that the Recent Landmarks initiative remains a leader in the specialized realm of heritage conservation for Modern architecture, and that many North American cities have yet to match Vancouver's efforts.

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	ii
Table of Contents .....	iii
Dedication .....	v
Chapter 1 - Introduction.....	1
1.0 Purpose .....	1
1.0.1 Primary Purpose.....	1
1.0.2 Secondary Purpose.....	3
1.1 Research Question .....	5
1.2 Scope.....	6
1.3 Background.....	7
1.4 Methodology .....	8
1.4.1 Literature Review .....	8
1.4.2 Questionnaire/Survey (see: Appendices 2 + 3).....	10
1.4.3 Case Studies .....	11
1.4.4 Site Visits.....	13
1.5 Definitions .....	13
1.6 Format .....	16
1.7 Chapter Summary.....	17
Chapter 2 - The Context and The Debate.....	18
2.0 Context .....	18
2.0.1 A Brief History of the Modern Movement.....	18
2.0.2 The Rise of Modernism in Canada .....	21
2.0.3 British Columbia .....	23
2.0.4 Summation .....	26
2.0.5 Decline of the Modern Empire - Globally.....	27
2.0.6 Decline of the Modern Empire - Locally.....	31
2.1 Debate: Is Modern Architecture Worth Protecting? .....	33
2.1.1 Arguments Against Modernism .....	33
2.1.2 Arguments for Conservation.....	36
2.2 Chapter Summary.....	40
Chapter 3 - Policies and Programs in Vancouver and Other North American Cities .....	41
3.0 Recent Landmarks.....	41
3.1 Heritage Conservation Policy and Program .....	44
3.1.1 Vancouver Heritage Bylaw and Policy.....	44
3.1.2 Heritage Conservation Program .....	47
3.1.3 Vancouver Heritage Foundation.....	55
3.2 Provincial Heritage Designation in Vancouver .....	56
3.3 Policies and Programs From Other Cities.....	56
3.4 Chapter Summary.....	62
Chapter 4 – Case Studies .....	64
4.0 Introduction .....	64
4.1 The B.C. Electric/Hydro Building.....	64
4.1.1 Context.....	64

4.1.2 Revitalization .....	67
4.1.3 Economic Viability .....	70
4.1.4 Conservation Evaluation .....	71
4.1.5 Feedback.....	72
4.2 The Vancouver Public Library (Former Main Branch) .....	73
4.2.1 Context.....	73
4.2.2 Revitalization .....	75
4.2.3 Conservation Evaluation .....	81
4.2.4 Feedback.....	83
4.3 Analysis .....	85
4.4 Chapter Summary.....	85
Chapter 5 – Conclusions .....	87
5.0 Conclusions .....	87
5.0.1 Introduction.....	87
5.0.2 Assessing Recent Landmarks .....	88
5.0.3 Programs that Address the Recent Past - Vancouver vs. Other North American Cities .....	91
5.0.4 Broader Heritage Programs – Vancouver vs. Other North American Cities .....	93
5.1 Recommendations .....	94
5.2 Final Comments: The Issue of Political and Public Responsibility .....	96
5.3 Chapter Summary.....	96
Bibliography.....	98
City of Vancouver – Documents Cited.....	102
Appendix 1 – Professionals Cited .....	103
Appendix 2 – Questionnaire Form.....	104
Appendix 3 – Questionnaire Responses .....	105
A. Introduction.....	105
B. Results of Survey .....	105
B.1 Toronto .....	105
B.2 Victoria .....	112
B.3 New York .....	116
B.4 Los Angeles .....	120
B.5 Phoenix.....	122
B.6 Dessau.....	124

## Dedication

As this is the first opportunity I have had to publicly dedicate anything to anyone, I would like to be a bit sentimental and acknowledge the following people:

First I would like thank my Mom, who was my hero, teacher, and source of love and support for the first 21 years of my life. She was truly one of the best people to ever walk this earth.

I also want to thank my Dad, who picked up the pieces and became a big joy to me, an amazing friend, and an even better father.

I would like to express my gratitude to my grandparents, for being stable and consistent in time of instability and inconsistency.

And of course, I would like to thank Greg. For everything.

## Chapter 1 - Introduction

"Mention 'heritage' and 'modern architecture' in the same breath and it's sure to provoke a puzzled response...from those who still equate the loss of the old – some would say 'real' heritage – with ... urban renewal. In the last decade, however, around the world and across the country, the architecture of the Modern movement has attracted renewed interest. In Vancouver, the buildings from the recent past are being reassessed and rehabilitated as legacies of that young city's growth, as integral parts of its heritage" (Robert Lemon 1998)

### **1.0 Purpose**

#### **1.0.1 Primary Purpose**

The primary purpose of this thesis is to point to contemporary heritage conservation initiatives and programs in North America that are specifically concerned with twentieth-century buildings, in order to inform heritage planning in Vancouver. Though advocacy bodies, design professionals, governmental agencies, and ad-hoc groups worldwide have lobbied for the preservation of historical structures for many years, the inclusion of Modern architecture in this broader heritage conservation movement is relatively new. Formal designations of Modern buildings via policies designed to protect or celebrate more aged built heritage remain rare. Yet even rarer are distinct guidelines, plans and/or inventories created to explicitly recognize this century's architecture.

Moreover, scholar Susan Bronson notes that while some "progress has been made in the *development* of approaches to research, commemorate, and protect the built heritage of the recent past, the *implementation* of appropriate guidelines for its conservation remains a [largely] unrealized goal" (1:1997, emphasis added).

However, "the last decade has witnessed an ever-increasing interest in the built heritage of the Modern era", and many associations and governing bodies *have* begun to confront the challenge of identifying, documenting and conserving the buildings and sites of the Modern era (Ibid.:1). For example, on the international front, the World Heritage Committee has now accepted buildings and sites from the twentieth-century for its World Heritage List. Likewise, several countries that contain significant Modern structures have begun preparing strategies to formally acknowledge their resources, as well as organizing conferences to discuss appropriate preservation techniques. And "Canadians are becoming increasingly prepared to consider the buildings...of this period as part of our cultural heritage..." (Ibid.:3). As such, in 1997 the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada commissioned Bronson to examine frameworks in which the built heritage of the Modern era could be evaluated.

At the local level, Vancouver has led North American cities in commemorating Modern heritage. In 1990, City of Vancouver planners initiated the Recent Landmarks study, thus launching a progressive, specialized program aimed at documenting and conserving the city's post-war architecture. While this program has raised awareness and catalogued a large stock of Modern resources, few of the identified buildings have been protected with legal heritage designation. Thus it seems appropriate to explore Vancouver's Recent Landmarks program and to assemble comparative information (from other jurisdictions) against which to measure it.



### **1.0.2 Secondary Purpose**

The secondary purpose of this thesis is to amplify current efforts to broaden and redefine the notion of structural heritage to include twentieth-century work. In recent years, the Modern style has attracted renewed attention. For instance, many members of the architectural avant-garde (notably in England and the Scandinavian countries) have returned to a restrained yet poetic form of expression, in direct contrast to the Postmodern stylism of the 1970's and 1980's. Commentators in the architectural realm have re-discovered the innovation and social significance of the Modern movement (see: *Blueprint, Architecture* and other architecture magazines). Even popular culture reflects this trend: the immensely popular magazine *Wallpaper* serves as a sort of handbook for neo-Modern aficionados, and the shop design of major worldwide retailers such as The Gap is characterized by a pared-down simplicity.

This reemergence of Modern elements in contemporary design culture has surfaced parallel to the developing interest in conserving Modernist architecture. As already discussed, several heritage bodies have begun to move forward from a traditional, beaux-arts concept of heritage to include Modern architecture in their definitions of meaningful built history. Moreover, specialist heritage organizations have been formed to exclusively consider the Modern movement. DOCOMOMO, the prime such group, was created in 1990 to "press for the documentation and conservation of the best examples [of Modern architecture] as well as promote a greater understanding of the ideas behind it" (see: DOCOMOMO website at [www.ooo.nl/docomomo/general.htm](http://www.ooo.nl/docomomo/general.htm)).

DOCOMOMO now has active working parties in 33 countries and regularly disseminates information through its journals and conferences.

More locally, architectural historians and design critics in the popular media brought Vancouver and Modernism into contemporary discussion by way of a 1997 Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) exhibit that explored Vancouver's Modern era. This dialogue was also provoked by two mid-1990's heritage conservation projects that involved well-known post-war Vancouver landmarks. The book that accompanied the CCA exhibit (also entitled The New Spirit: Modern Architecture in Vancouver 1938-1963) was the first major piece of scholarship to examine mid-century Canadian West Coast architecture, and the social and economic conditions in which it developed. In the epilogue, author Rhodri Windsor-Liscombe comments on Vancouver's "Modernist legacy" and notes that:

"The Modernist architecture of the two post-war decades established Vancouver's reputation as a centre for innovative design and culture. It attained regional distinctiveness, not just in domestic architecture, but in institutional and commercial architecture...[what has already been lost] of the Modernist legacy concentrated in Vancouver, once thought to furnish 'standards for the remainder of Canada to imitate', has impoverished Canada, not just Vancouver" (179).

However, while heritage advocates, academics, and design professionals have begun to appreciate the merit of Vancouver's significant organic Modern structures, many outside of these realms seem less certain. Public discussion in response to the "New Spirit" exhibit and the adaptive re-use rehabilitations of Vancouver's B.C. Hydro and former Main Library buildings became a forum through which debate ranged on the heritage merit of the Modernist genre. Thus

to elaborate on this discussion, I selected a research question that augments the meager body of literature specific to the heritage conservation of Modern architecture in Vancouver.

### **1.1 Research Question**

The research question that is examined in this thesis is the following:

*Vancouver planners recognized the city's Modern architecture as a valuable heritage legacy with the initiation of the Recent Landmarks program. Have other North American cities created similar programs? If so, have they developed options that could be applied in Vancouver to augment local planning efforts to commemorate and protect this resource?*

To date, several sources (both academic and in the popular media) have demonstrated that Vancouver's Modern structures constitute a valuable layer of that city's built history (see: New Spirit..., the City of Vancouver's Recent Landmarks pamphlet, Shadbolt, Robin Ward in the *Vancouver Sun*, Adele Freedman in the *Globe and Mail*). It has been argued that because of their architectural "achievements" and "socio-cultural relevance", Vancouver's remaining Modernist structures "deserve to be contextualized, [and] seen in a longer, broader perspective" (Windsor-Liscombe, 1997: 23). This thesis implicitly supports such assertions and acknowledges the architectural value and socio-historical worth of many of the buildings of the Modern movement (both in Vancouver and internationally).

Thus, in sum, the line of research pursued in this thesis serves to review Vancouver's Recent Landmarks program, renew the study of policies and programs (related to Modern architecture and heritage planning) that preceded the establishment of the Recent Landmarks inventory, and complement new definitions of heritage that include Modern resources.

## **1.2 Scope**

Research for this thesis has been contained in four key ways. First, discussion was confined to the Modern ideology and architectural style. Modern, in this case, is defined as the technologically-driven, functionalist design of the early to mid-twentieth-century, that was conceived in response to the "chaos and eclecticism of the various earlier nineteenth-century revivals of historical forms" (Curtis, 1996:11).

Second, study was limited to address a definite time period, parallel to the height of influence of Modernism. The pertinent years internationally are generally defined as between 1905-10 and 1960-65. Modernism dawned with functionalist projects like designer Peter Behrens' Berlin AEG Turbine Factory, and generally concluded with the advent of a more "complex" approach that advocated sensitivity "to the need for identity" (Frampton, 1992:271). For Vancouver, Windsor-Liscombe defines the height of Modernism as the period between 1938 and 1963, beginning with "the first experimental Modern houses and [ending with] the design competition for [the more stylistically expressive] Simon Fraser University" (1997:27).

Third, this thesis concentrates largely on one city. Although surveys were sent to representatives in several Canadian and American cities, thus referencing these locales, the information in the thesis converges on Vancouver. The material from other jurisdictions is intended to be used comparatively and to inform heritage planning in Vancouver. As well, the two case studies I speak to in Chapter 4 centre on Vancouver.

The fourth way this thesis has been focused concerns its approach. I have confined my discussion primarily to the issues of initiatives and programs and have excluded other related topics (such as preservation technology).

### **1.3 Background**

My initial exposure to Modern architecture was in Prague in 1994. As part of a university summer field school, I consulted with the Czech occupants of former Soviet state housing projects to determine which social or structural improvements were most pressing. Surprisingly, many of the surveyed inhabitants were most concerned with countering the austere imagery of their housing. For example, cornices were a highly desired improvement. Thus, my first encounter with Modern architecture (although a lesser, derided form of it) was based on noting its deficiencies.

My grounding in the theoretical underpinnings and formal characteristics of abstract functionalist architecture came from several art and architectural history classes taken at the University of British Columbia and McGill University. The texts and articles that accompanied my studies served as a foundation from

which I was able to pursue more specialist analyses. In an in-depth study written for Rhodri Windsor-Liscombe, I argued for the presence of a distinct post-war, West Coast style by analyzing several self-designed Canadian architects' homes from that time. While absorbed in this research, I began to appreciate the Modern aesthetic and ideals as well as the particular significance of the West Coast style to Vancouver.

#### **1.4 Methodology**

##### ***1.4.1 Literature Review***

A literature review, combined with a questionnaire and two case studies, formed the essential methodological components of my thesis research. For the literature review I consulted academic primary and secondary sources and the print media. As there are few works that are directly related to this thesis topic, I have simply outlined the results of the literature review in the following paragraphs.

The existing literature that relates to this thesis can be grouped into six broad categories. *First*, there is ample literature that treats the various plans and techniques related to heritage planning in general (see: Denhez, 1978 or Uzzell, 1989). While it would be impossible to review all of the literature in this category, it appears from my sample that most of this scholarship is aimed at the conservation of more aged heritage and is thus less relevant to Modern heritage. *Second*, there is a large body of work that deals with Modernism in its totality (see: Frampton, 1992 or Curtis, 1996). *Third*, there is a growing sector of

research that interacts with the Modern movement in a more specialized way. For example, last year Alice Friedman published an intricate socio-historical study of how particular women impacted the designs of their well-known Modern homes. The *fourth* broad category of work concerns the physical preservation of the forms and materials that constitute Modern architecture (see: Burman, 1996, Stratton, 1997 or Macdonald, 1995). Many of these books resulted from conferences and symposiums on preservation technology. The *fifth* category of work that I consulted can be characterized as the "slice of time and place" book, for example "Canadian architecture in the 1960's" (see: Whiteson, 1983). Valuable more for imagery than text, these works generally resemble the "coffee table" genre in that they contain several glossy photographs and little analysis. *Finally*, there are very limited resources that specifically treat Modern architecture in Vancouver (see: Windsor-Liscombe, 1997, Shadbolt, 1983, Adele Freedman in the *Globe and Mail*, or Robin Ward in the *Vancouver Sun*).

It is my hope that this thesis will contribute to the literature by fusing two issues - heritage conservation (the first broad category of literature) and Modernism in Vancouver (the last category) - and speak to how these issues will be reconciled in regard to that city's policy and programs.

#### **1.4.2 Questionnaire/Survey** (see: Appendices 2 + 3)

The second methodological component of my thesis is a questionnaire, which was developed to assess whether select cities recognized Modern heritage in the form of policy, guidelines, or heritage inventories. Beyond these

basic queries, the survey also contained questions that attempted to discern the scope, nature, and efficacy of such initiatives. This questionnaire was sent to representatives in Toronto, Montreal, Victoria, Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, and Phoenix. More specifically, it was addressed to civic planning or cultural/landmark department staff, and to the Chairs of local chapters of DOCOMOMO, the international organization formed to document and conserve the works of the Modern movement. The results of this inquiry form part of Chapter 4, and are detailed in Appendix 3. It should be noted that though two people (a city planner and a heritage advocate) in Montreal were contacted and agreed to take part in this survey, neither replied to the questionnaire in the end. Similarly, the representative in Chicago did not return the survey.

The cities to which I sent the survey were selected based on two factors:

- *Comparative similarity to Vancouver*

For example, (like Vancouver) Toronto is a large Canadian metropolis experiencing growth. Toronto also contains significant Modern buildings that have been threatened by the drive for new development. I anticipated that planners in Toronto may have developed means to recognize and protect Modern heritage. If so, then these means could be explored for use in Vancouver because of the similar governmental and socio-cultural contexts. All of the cities surveyed in this thesis were selected based on this criterion.

- *Stock of Modern buildings*

For example, Los Angeles and Phoenix grew exponentially in this century and thus contain a substantial layer of Modern history. Cities such as these were



selected for their comparatively large stocks of International Style buildings. I should also note that I contacted a representative of DOCOMOMO Germany in Dessau (because of that city's intrinsic ties to the genesis of the Modern movement) so that I might have a source of comparison drawn from the European context. I presumed that the civic government of Dessau (or perhaps German national government) would have developed methods to ensure the continuation of this Modern legacy. However I also recognized that while this city may have well-established policies, these would likely be too complex to relate to Vancouver because of the different regulatory and governance structures.

#### **1.4.3 Case Studies**

The case studies presented in this thesis are of two of Vancouver's most distinguished post-war buildings. In recent years both structures were threatened, protected with heritage designation in exchange for incentives, and then refurbished for new uses.

The first case study looks at the B.C. Hydro office building, which was designed by the powerhouse Vancouver firm Thompson Berwick and Pratt. One of the most distinctive buildings of the city's post-war building boom, this structure is an excellent example of West Coast Modern architecture. In 1994, well-known local architect Paul Merrick embarked on a sensitive process of upgrading, rehabilitating, and converting the B.C. Hydro Building into strata-titled condominium units.

The second case study looks at the former Main Branch of the Vancouver Public Library, which was conceived by local Modernist partnership, Semmens and Simpson. At the time of its completion, this building was considered one of Canada's finest examples of a new Modern institutional architecture.

Because of the extensive modifications made to the Library building and because of its renewed purpose as a somewhat gaudy commercial space, architect James Cheng's work provoked more controversy than Merrick's B.C. Hydro rehabilitation. Yet despite outcries from heritage conservation purists, the Library building retains the essence of its original form and has been granted a lively new role.

These case studies are intended to demonstrate and explicate the application of heritage tools to protect Vancouver's Modern landmarks. These examples also serve to illustrate various aspects of Vancouver's current incentive-based heritage programs, speak to public opinion on Vancouver's recent heritage, and illuminate possibilities for re-using other twentieth-century structures. The information for the case studies came from publicly obtainable City of Vancouver Heritage Planning documents, research I performed as a student intern in Heritage Planning, architectural journals, newspapers, and a personal interview with architect Paul Merrick.

#### **1.4.4 Site Visits**

Another tool that formed part of my research methodology was the site visit. Though I had abundant information on the two Vancouver case studies, it

became imperative to visually explore each building. From this, I gained a more tangible sense of each structure and space. I was also fortunate to possess a source of comparison, as I had visited both buildings pre-rehabilitation.

### **1.5 Definitions**

Several terms arise in this thesis that should be clarified at this point. The first term that is essential to define is "heritage". This is a somewhat nebulous term that conveys a different meaning depending on who the user is and how the term is used. The definition of heritage that I use for this thesis is essentially that which is collectively and culturally meaningful to a group of people or a region. Our heritage "provides us with a basis for seeing where we have been, for measuring how far we have come, and for evaluating where we are going" (Fenton et al, 1977:1).

In the past, heritage conservationists defined "heritage" as those *structures* that contained strong societal meaning and/or historic associations. Today the concept of heritage can be more broadly defined to include non-structural notions of heritage, more common-place (less elitist) ideas of what is culturally and historically important, and the heritage of cultures other than the dominant ones. However, in this thesis I will be looking solely at built heritage and the layer of urban texture that Modern buildings provide.

Another term that is often used in this paper is "Modern". I use "Modern" to denote the architecture of, and period of time between (as previously defined) 1905-10 and 1960-65 internationally, and 1938-1963 in Vancouver. In using this

term, I haven't differentiated between "good" and "bad" Modernism: essentially I apply the term to the whole spectrum of design in this time period, from the celebrated high Modernism of Le Corbusier to the mock-Modern commercial high-rises that sprung up all over the world. What remains common to these disparate forms of Modernism is the fact that they were all, to varying degrees, "influenced by three cultural phenomena: (a) changing social, political, and economic conditions, (b) rapid technological advances, and (c) new ways of expressing form and responding to functional demands" (Bronson, 1997:1).

I also use the expressions "contemporary", "abstract functionalist", "functionalist", "post-war", and "twentieth-century" to convey a similar meaning as that attached to the term "Modern". When I apply the widely-recognized phrase "West Coast style" to a building, I intend to indicate a more regionalized, Vancouver-specific definition of Modern.

Within the field of heritage conservation there are several specific terms used to denote the conservation approach or "level of intervention" (Oberlander et al, 1989:6). These terms are multi-layered, and are sometimes used (confusingly) in different ways by different people. To furnish basic understanding of these concepts, for example, what "heritage conservation" or "heritage preservation" actually means, I will explain and differentiate some key terms that arise in this thesis (using definitions established by Judy Oberlander, Harold Kalman, and Robert Lemon in the publication, Principles of Heritage Conservation).

First of all, heritage conservation itself is defined as: "All actions aimed at the safeguarding of cultural property for the future. Its purpose is to study, record, retain, and restore the culturally significant qualities of the object with the least possible intervention" (Ibid.:7).

The conservation approach of least interference, *preservation*, is essentially a "program of maintenance...designed to prevent further deterioration and to keep a building, structure or site 'as is'" (Ibid.:10). More commonly practiced (and relevant to the B.C. Hydro Building case study in this thesis) is the *rehabilitation* approach. This is "the process of returning a property to a usable state through repair or alteration. Rehabilitation makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features which are most significant to the property's historic, architectural, and cultural values" (Ibid.:13).

Two types of rehabilitation are commonly practiced: continued-use and adaptive re-use. The former is when a building is upgraded for the same use as its original purpose. The latter involves converting a building to a "new use when it has outlived its previous function" (Ibid.:13). The term *retrofit* has a comparable meaning to adaptive re-use.

Higher up on the scale of intervention (and relevant to the Vancouver Public Library case study in this thesis) is the *renovation* approach, which involves "extensive changes and additions made to a building [both] internally and externally" (Ibid.:17). It is important to note that most heritage conservation projects are composed of a blending of the aforementioned approaches rather than discrete types of intervention.

## **1.6 Format**

The format or structure of this thesis is as follows: this chapter, the "Introduction", is essentially the prelude to the body of the thesis. In this chapter I have provided an overview of both the thesis and the concepts underlying it. Chapter 2, "The Context and The Debate", situates my topic in its larger context, and introduces the reader to Modernism, its merits, and its shortcomings. More specifically, Chapter 2 details the underlying rationale for the rise of Modernism in Canada, and explains the particular significance of this style to Vancouver. In the latter part of Chapter 2, the fall of Modernism is briefly explored, as are some of the essential arguments for and against preserving post-war design. Chapter 3, "Policies and Programs in Vancouver and Other North American Cities", describes the development of Vancouver's Recent Landmarks program in detail and explains the City's heritage policy. Moreover, Chapter 3 also contains comparative information from the other North American cities that were surveyed for this thesis. Chapter 4, "Case Studies", looks at the application of Vancouver's heritage policy vis-a-vis the two aforementioned case studies. Finally, in Chapter 5, "Conclusions", I present the significant findings of this thesis and my recommendations. Additionally, the questionnaire form is reproduced in full in Appendix 2, and in Appendix 3, the (rephrased) responses to the questionnaire are presented.

## **1.7 Chapter Summary**

The concept of commemorating the architecture of the recent past is still new. However, several cities have begun to consider their twentieth-century structures and initiate plans to conserve such resources. In Vancouver, planners were quick to respond to the challenge of identifying the city's important Modern architecture by developing the Recent Landmarks inventory. It seems appropriate to reflect on that program now, ten years after its inception, and relate it to programs and policies from other jurisdictions. In this light, it can be determined whether Recent Landmarks remains the most developed Modern heritage management program in North America or whether there are lessons to be learned from other municipalities.

## **Chapter 2 - The Context and The Debate**

“And so, finally. What did we set out to do? What did we accomplish? Where did we fail? I believe that we set out to set up a program, a strategy, and a method, and that we accomplished just that: we plotted the main courses for navigation for an architecture of our times” (Wells Coates 1957)

### **2.0 Context**

#### ***2.0.1 A Brief History of the Modern Movement***

There is a sizeable body of literature that has studied the ideology, structures, and individuals of the international Modern movement (see: bibliography). Therefore in this thesis I will include only a brief overview, intended to serve as an introduction to Modernism in Canada.

Conceived to attend to the distinct social and structural challenges of a war-torn and rapidly industrializing world, Modern architecture introduced social-democratic theory to design. Scholar William Curtis noted that, “...[I]n the war-damaged areas of Western and Eastern Europe the first question had been survival, the second the guarantee of a roof over people’s heads...” (1996:471). The modern architect was thus enlisted to be an agent of social change, and his/her domain shifted from privileging the elite to devising solutions to widespread problems of “shelter, hygiene, and function” (Ibid.:472). The resulting Modern idiom was thus founded under the premise of creating “a brave, new world [to] rise out of the ruins” (Ibid.:472).



In his seminal book The Sources of Modern Architecture and Design, Nikolaus Pevsner points to these and other influences as he identifies the following foundations of Modern thought and practice.

First, early twentieth century architects, engineers, and designers looked to new forms to be able to express the faith that they possessed in the “modern age” (Ibid.:164). Distancing themselves from historical precedents, early Modernists such as Adolf Loos proposed stark, flat, and cubic designs for residential, commercial and industrial structures.

Likewise, a strong belief in the power of technology was central. New materials were used in innovative ways, and science and engineering became allied with architecture and design. The Deutsche Werkbund, a German collective of what would now be termed industrial designers, possessed an “appreciation of the machine” that directed their work (Ibid.:175). The clean lines of the Werkbund’s household fans echoed their huge industrial cousins, while kettles and teapots were formed of industrial steel for durability. Another example lies in Tony Garnier’s 1917 plan for the “Cite Industrielle”, which was developed around the technological requirements of industry and workers. Garnier’s concept featured a prominent power source, factories, yards, and docks in contrast to planning norms that underscored, for example, Haussmannesque grand boulevards.

Modern designers also looked to express utility in a sincere way. They worked within a functionalist aesthetic that represented use in an open manner, and abandoned adornment and embellishment. Pevsner cites Viennese

architect Otto Wagner as noting that “[n]othing that is not practical can be beautiful” (Ibid.:164). A more extreme example is Adolf Loos’ 1908 essay on purism, entitled “Ornament and Crime”, in which he “associated applied decoration with infantilism, gangsterism, and deviant sexual practices” (Boddy, 1987:15).

Finally, as briefly mentioned already, a growing social awareness influenced Modernist design. “Architects and designers accepted social responsibility and the... buildings and objects of daily use were not only designed to satisfy the aesthetic wishes of their designers but also to fulfill their practical purposes” (Pevsner, 1968:201). This anti-elitist philosophical bent was grounded in the devastation of war, the growth of socialist ideologies, and the need to respond to new class divisions. The Modernist philosophy of equity was manifest in the decline of craft, and the rise of industrial design and mass-production for the working-classes.

These influences were united in one (relatively) coherent style, labeled the Modern movement and/or the International Style, which prevailed throughout the first half of this century. The forefathers of this style included Wagner, Loos, and Peter Behrens. The “high Modernists” included the Germans who immigrated to the U.S. and helped extend the Modernist reach, like Walter Gropius, Mies Van der Rohe, and Richard Neutra; France’s Le Corbusier; American Frank Lloyd Wright; the Dutch De Stijl movement’s Gerrit Rietveld; and Finland’s Alvar Aalto. All of these architects created celebrated works, from Rietveld’s rigidly

geometrical, colour-blocked chair of 1917 to Aalto's organic 1952 Saynatsalo Town Hall (for more detail, see: Curtis, 1996 or Frampton, 1992).

While this outline and list of designers is far from exhaustive, together they identify the key socio-cultural stimuli and the influential architects of the early- to mid-twentieth century. In the next section, I will look at how Modern motivations and form impacted Canadian design.

### ***2.0.2 The Rise of Modernism in Canada***

In the middle of the twentieth-century, Canada had entered a profound period of growth and change born of the Second World War. The economy was strong, aided by extensive resource development, and intense post-war population and building expansions persisted (the latter fueled by “a freeing-up of space” in response to housing demands) (Windsor-Liscombe, 1997:47). In addition, communication advances allowed for information to be quickly exchanged between the nation's centres and peripheries and long-distance travel became more accessible, thus increasing public exposure to different cultural and regional dialogues.

As noted by one observer, “the [broader] world situation produced [some societal] introspection about basic values, exacerbated by the Cold War, and penetrating examination of North American middle-class standards and goals” (Charles H. Scott Gallery, 1983:15). As a result, social-democratic political forces prevailed and governments intervened in housing and other issues of the newly created welfare state. This multiplication of the federal government's roles

coincided with the inception of many Canadian cultural and learning institutions. And all of this change was taking place within the greater process of establishing a national identity.

Accordingly, Canadian architecture reflected national and regional socio-cultural and political values. In the 1950's, the Canadian architectural profession completed a paradigm shift (begun the previous decade) in both its educational curricula and working practices. This new direction incorporated ideas that had circulated in Europe since the early part of this century, and more recently, in the U.S.

"The predominant architectural influences of the Modern movement during this period emanated from the United States and Europe. Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer had arrived in the U.S. from Germany...Mies van der Rohe had arrived in Chicago from Germany...Frank Lloyd Wright was going strong in the Midwest...Richard Neutra and Rudolph Schindler were established in California... Le Corbusier had published his "complete works" in 1945. The work and ideas of all these architects and planners and their disciples were the obsession of the post-war generation of students and, to varying degrees, influenced the quality and direction of architecture throughout this period" (Shadbolt, 1983:108)

The previously unchallenged beaux-arts classicism of Canadian architecture was labeled "redundant and functionally useless historicist decoration", thus freeing local designers to broadly adopt and adapt the Modern movement's relevant concepts (Boddy, 1987:15). Looking to their international mentors, post-war Canadian architects concerned themselves with issues of efficiency and economy (of space and adornment), social welfare, temporal relevance, utility, technology, and new sources of aesthetic inspiration.

This theoretical shift was facilitated by a Canadian population generally dissatisfied with the "Old Order and the deficient social conditions it condoned..." and aware of the urgent need for housing and reconstruction (Windsor-Liscombe, 1996:41). Casting off the past was the final step in this ideological transformation: "The rejection of the accumulated works of earlier architects and builders (and implicitly of the conventional urban fabric these works had respected) cleared the way for an accelerated acceptance and implementation of Modernist principles" (Bernstein, 1981:12). In essence, Canada's rapid postwar change and growth had created social and structural needs that were met by the embrace of Modern thought and practice.

### **2.0.3 *British Columbia***

British Columbia, in particular, provided fertile ground for Modern ideas to take root. "...[T]he Modernist vocabulary was a vocabulary of liberation...from the forms of a colonial past, and especially from the inability to express through architecture the place and culture in which [B.C.'s contemporary architects] found themselves" (Crossman, 1997:24). Experiencing more growth than (and lacking the comparatively established architectural traditions of) the Canadian east, B.C. was notably resolute in applying new theoretical solutions to the problems of its expanding built environment.

This growth was rooted in the economic prosperity of British Columbia in the 1950's. The province's burgeoning commercial activities (such as resource exploration, forestry, port traffic, and increased regional banking) accounted for

much of the prosperity (Roy, 1980:152). As well, the economy was fed by post-war population booms. In Vancouver, the need for inexpensive family housing spread residential development to the city's edges, creating jobs constructing homes, bridges, and freeways.

Post-war social change also opened up conditions of opportunity that sped the acceptance of new styles of building and living. Vancouver's cultural constitution shifted from a predominantly British society towards a more multicultural one. The civic government rapidly expanded community programs and facilities for approximately 370,000 Vancouver residents. And the arts scene was galvanized by the Community Arts Council who held exhibitions, lobbied government, and argued for contemporary architecture and better city planning.

Both Canadian and European architects and engineers became attracted to Vancouver as an emergent, open-minded city. Adjusting the International Style to fit local criteria, these designers tried to address the swelling population's structural needs with a Modern sensibility and a sensitivity to the West Coast. (see: New Spirit... for a complete listing of significant buildings and designers). A key component in the development of this distinct West Coast style was the visit of architect Richard Neutra to Vancouver (Ron Thom, a student at the time, summed up the lecture many years later by stating, "Did Neutra ever turn me on!" [qt. in Kalman, 1994:787]). Neutra's lecture reached an eager audience and:

"suggested...new possibilities for residential and other construction. These were particularly influential in Vancouver

because they demonstrated 'West Coast' possibilities. Neutra talked of... all the features we have come to associate with the 'International Style', yet reinterpreted to respond to the site, materials and climate of the West Coast" (Shadbolt, 1983: 110).

Over time, such ideas were restated by Vancouver architects as qualities that came to *definitively* characterize the Canadian "West Coast style". Post-and-beam construction, flat roofs, flexible and economical open floor plans, and extensive glazing were stylistically typical for domestic architecture, as were the points suggested here by Ron Thom,

"Let's talk post-war...We on the West Coast were more conscious of Japanese, California and northern architecture than anything out east...We were all very oriented to natural materials...if I built you a wood house, there's no damn way you're going to paint that thing... We also took topography into account..." (qt. in Freedman, 1990:43).

In commercial and institutional buildings, rationalism met the West Coast in a more organic interpretation of the International Style skyscraper or "glass box". Legible structural expression, transparency, and the use of new materials and technologies distinguished such structures, which "emulat[ed] ...Mies' aesthetic and material purism, modified by the biofunctionalism of Neutra.." (Windsor-Liscombe, 1997:170).

It is important to note that this era of West Coast design is marked not only by its local innovation, but also by its significance to the rest of the country. In the introduction to his survey book on Modern architecture in Canada, author Leon Whiteson stated:

"It was the so-called Vancouver School, remote from those eastern centres of power, that first caught the country's eye as a distinctively Canadian modern style" (1983:13).

Notable expressions of the regard held by Canadian architects for the “depth of architectural ability and range of architectural expression in the Modernist era at Vancouver” can be found in the contemporary literature (Windsor-Liscombe, 1997:114). Several post-war issues of the Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada [JRAIC] were devoted to this city, and numerous profiles on Vancouver architects and architecture appeared at the time in national design journals and magazines.

#### **2.0.4 Summation**

While the post-war architecture of Vancouver attests to the presence of distinct regional style, the motivating factors behind this marked West Coast style were also being considered elsewhere in mid-century Canada. The cost of building was an issue across the country, as was an enthusiasm for new materials. Moreover, unadorned exteriors, curtain wall construction, and the use of open plans characterized architecture in many regions of post-war Canada.

However the extenuating factors of expansive growth and demand for housing coupled with an artistic freedom associated with Vancouver at that time enabled the West Coast architects to thoroughly develop and articulate their vernacular. These conditions of opportunity also expedited the acceptance of this style, allowing it to be widely applied and acknowledged.



### **2.0.5 Decline of the Modern Empire - Globally**

By the late 1960's, the dissolution of the Modern movement was well underway, both internationally and in Canada. This decline was due to the commercialization and "ruthless economic exploitation" of the forms and ideals of Modernism, as it was to inherent limitations in the architecture (Frampton, 1992:290). Diane Ghirardo, in her book Architecture After Modernism, describes the retreat of Modernism as such: "[w]here the forces of modernization in the early twentieth century tended to obscure...differences, Postmodernists focus precisely on these differences and bring to the fore that which had been marginalized by dominant cultures" (8). Evidently the architects that responded to Modernism opposed both its "formal elaboration and its underlying social and political premises" (Ibid.:8). As well, it should be noted that it is probable that the natural ebb and flow of popular aesthetics and ideologies contributed to the wane of Modernist rule.

A series of landmark events beginning in the late 1950's clearly signaled this shift in architectural theory and practice, in which plurality contested the universal design solutions of the Modern movement and historical references re-emerged in architecture. For example, the heritage conservation movement emerged in response to the large-scale destruction of older buildings and subsequent massive Modern redevelopment efforts. In the following paragraphs some of the other major milestones are discussed, such as the creation of Team X out of the fading *Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* (CIAM), Robert Venturi's treatise on the need for richness and ambiguity in architecture,

and the demolition of the Pruitt-Igoe housing complex in St. Louis. It is important to remember, though, that while these events form part of the explanation for the retreat of Modernism, they are also largely *symbols* of this shift. For example, while the Modern towers of Pruitt-Igoe were desolate and structurally deficient, Katherine Bristol, in her paper "The Pruitt-Igoe Myth", asserts that the decay of this housing scheme was not solely the result of its design. This project was, in fact, condemned by a web of urban re-development issues, housing policies and "political, economic, and social" factors (170). Bristol argues that "it is the privileging of the design problems over the much more deeply embedded economic and social ones that constitutes the core of the Pruitt-Igoe myth" (Ibid.:167). Thus the mythical/iconic proportions of events like the demolition of Pruitt-Igoe (i.e. the image of the "death of Modernism") have overshadowed the very real and complex issues that doomed this project to failure (Jencks qt. in Bristol:168).

The first challenge to high Modernism reviewed in this thesis comes in the form of a reaction to the rigid doctrine that became entrenched in the theory and work of the Modern movement. In 1956, at the tenth meeting of the CIAM, a group of ten younger European architects broke away to form the Team X consortium. Their goal was to present a more complex pattern of living, that was "responsive to the need for identity" (Frampton, 1992:271). Architects such as Peter and Alison Smithson and Aldo van Eyck were part of this "loose affiliation of individuals from several nations who pooled ideas on broadly shared themes to do with architecture and urbanism" (Curtis, 1996:549).

While to the layperson's eye, the actual built forms that these designers generated might approximate the harshness of the International Style, Team X's underlying concerns for "'human association', 'urban re-identification', and 'pluralism'" were clearly a departure from the anonymity of the Modernist norm (Frampton, 1992:272). In other words, while "the actual architectural results were abstract...", Team X provided a serious critique of the International Style that aimed to "humanize technology" (Curtis, 1996:555).

In the United States, Robert Venturi's 1966 book Complexity and Contradiction In Architecture provided the most articulated alternative theory to abstract functionalism. This book "pulled together the reflections of a decade, and functioned as a ...handbook of sensibility for a generation bored by the blandness of ...the International Style" (ibid.:560). Venturi advocated an architecture of "'several levels of meaning'", and stated that design should accommodate the "good and awkward, big and little, closed and open, continuous and articulated, round and square, structural and spatial" in order to breed "'ambiguity and tension'" (qt. in Curtis, 1996:560). Venturi argued for such "'honky-tonk elements in architectural order'" because these elements reflected existing, time-tested patterns of settlement and building, and responded to "'needs for variety and communication'" (qt. In Frampton, 1992:290). This call for heterogeneity contrasted the generalized solutions of Modernism.

Venturi explicated his written work with images of the past and with pop-culture American vernacular, and generally took a populist stance in his theory. Yet in practice, he layered his designs with a series of architectural references.

His Venturi house, built for his mother in 1963, contained several broad allusions to the components of a typical American home, but also made exclusionary “witty and ambiguous quotations from Le Corbusier and Palladio” (Curtis, 1996:562). Nevertheless, Venturi’s ultimate role lay not in material production, but rather in initiating a more pluralistic architectural debate (Frampton, 1992:290).

The third milestone marking the end of the Modern design era to be discussed is the aforementioned Pruitt-Igoe housing development. As part of the contemporary phenomenon of “slum clearance”, the St. Louis Housing Authority engaged an accomplished architectural firm (Leinweber, Yamasaki + Hellmuth) to design the city’s largest complex of social housing.

The architects initially proposed a plan mixing high-rise, mid-rise and walk-up buildings, but because this lower density scheme would have exceeded the US Federal housing authority’s maximum allowable cost per unit, the result, completed in 1954, was a series of 33 identical towers, each 11 storeys high. Likewise, many of the features intended to enhance the livability of the complex were prohibited by budgetary constraints. For example, playgrounds were never constructed and landscaping was never performed. Moreover, aspects of the design that had been intended to increase social interaction that *did* get built (like skip-stop elevators) ended up having the opposite effect. Within 5 years of construction, Pruitt-Igoe’s occupancy rate had declined, basic structural maintenance had ceased, and vandalism and violence prevailed.

Faced with the realization that the complex did not adequately meet basic shelter needs and following a long-term tenant rent strike, the Federal housing

authority decided to not only close Pruitt-Igoe, but raze it. By 1976, only 22 years after opening, all 33 buildings of the Pruitt-Igoe complex had been demolished.

Subsequent critiques in the architectural literature began to associate this development and its monumental collapse to all that had failed with Modernism and its social reforms. Pruitt-Igoe was held up as the pinnacle of Modern design and then summarily knocked down from this pedestal. Over time, Pruitt-Igoe and the Modern movement became inextricably linked in a union propagated by the repetition of myth (i.e. that Pruitt-Igoe had won several architectural awards), reality (that this project was flawed and desolate), and visual image (its demolition). While scholars like Bristol remind us of the *set* of reasons surrounding the failure of Pruitt-Igoe, the bleak high-rise landscape of social housing represented by Pruitt-Igoe will remain perpetually infamous because of the strong association between the literal fall of these buildings and the symbolic fall of the Modern movement.

#### ***2.0.6 Decline of the Modern Empire - Locally***

Responding to the contemporary critiques of Modernism, Vancouver architects also began a process of dissent in the 1960's. The shift in local architecture from a pure functionalism is probably best marked by Erickson Massey's 1963 master plan for the new Simon Fraser University (SFU). Formed of concrete and set into the mountain upon which it sat, this bold project imprinted a new style of design on the West Coast consciousness, and hastened

the move away from the previous generation's light, economical glass and wood structures. In terms of meaning, the design for SFU "advanced beyond the austere directness of post-war Modernism [in] its provision of... symbolic spaces [which] evoked monument..." and history (Windsor-Liscombe, 1997:179).

However less architecturally celebrated projects followed SFU, many of which were concentrated in Vancouver's downtown core and most of which were designed in the "formulaic Modern [style] of transcontinental commercial development" (Ibid.:178). A conventional approach to commercial architecture emerged, in which the details and eye for proportion that the "true" Modern towers had displayed were sacrificed for higher office floor space ratios. The nation's eye, which had been trained on the innovation of West Coast design, was cast elsewhere. As well, the effects of a recession in Vancouver in the early 1960's compounded the problem by paralyzing local design, construction, and financing (Ibid.:178).

A "Late-Modern" style was subsequently advanced, prevalent on the West Coast and across Canada from the mid-1960's through the 1970's, in which architects:

"extended and exaggerated the modernist vocabulary beyond the glass curtain wall; developed bolder, more sculptural shapes; used structural components in a more ornamental manner; and sought a more aggressive expression of function, individualism and structure" (Kalman, 1994:812).

Arthur Erickson went on to achieve international fame for such site-driven, picturesque work, and his cohorts, the next group of prominent Vancouver architects (Barry Downs, Paul Merrick) made a name for the West Coast again

with organic, crafted, woodsy houses. But despite these successes, Vancouver would never again achieve the same sort of national profile as it had enjoyed in the post-war years.

## **2.1 Debate: Is Modern Architecture Worth Protecting?**

### ***2.1.1 Arguments Against Modernism***

The contemporary distrust of Modern architecture has been well articulated: from the first rumblings of dissent in the mid-1950's, to the "anxious reassessment of Modernism's ideals and intent" in the 1960's, to the expressive, populist response to Modernism in the 1970's, through to the present, in which some people remember the Modern approach as "formulaic, authoritarian, and dehumanizing" (Windsor-Liscombe, 1997:27).

Critics and theoreticians have expressed the shortcomings of the Modernist ideology and style in distinct ways, but have often focused on common themes to explain why this idiom became so disliked. The themes that are invoked with most regularity by those arguing against retaining and rehabilitating Modern buildings include: the style's visual desolation; its lack of social/cultural/historical clues and references; and its entrenched association with commercialism, institutionalism, and high-rise monumentality.

Kenneth Frampton speaks to many of the key points in his seminal book, Modern Architecture: A Critical History. He states that "in the mid-1960's, architects began to realize that the reductive codes of contemporary architecture had led to an impoverishment of the urban environment" and that the "tabula

rasa reductivism of the Modern movement played a salient role in the wholesale destruction of urban culture" (290). Frampton points out that the Modernistic practice of urban renewal came to be viewed as a "euphemism for the dislocation of the poor", and the characteristic universal solutions of Modernism were later ably opposed by "contextualist critiques" that considered place and history (Ibid.:279, 290).

Likewise, William Curtis in Modern Architecture Since 1900 notes that the Modern emphasis was on "prose, rather than poetry, on norms, rather than ideas" (471). As well, Curtis states that Modern design "often lacked humanity and urban sensitivity" (Ibid.:471). Curtis faults the "absence of a pliable set of rules" when placing the blame for an architecture that "ignored variations of climate, culture, and topography" (Ibid.:473). Citing the problematic "endless egg-crate high-rises built around the world in the 1950's and 1960's", he ponders the architectural and economic justifications for "cutting corners in an over-simple response to the urban crises of the post-war era" (Ibid.:449).

Between the birth of Modernism as an avant-garde movement, and its scorned later life of establishment and patriarchy, a fundamental realignment of the Modern ideals took place. Its style became co-opted and restated as a vehicle for commercial interests or as a way of expressing "progressive ideals" in state architecture (Ibid.:514). The pioneers moved away from their collectivist beginnings, lured instead to design villas for the wealthy. The Modern idiom became simply the repetition of form without any expression of the original underlying principles.



German academic Claude Schnaidt summed up these sentiments in the following paragraph taken from his critical essay, "Architecture and Political Commitment", composed in 1967.

"..the pioneers of modern architecture...instead of pandering to the tastes of the privileged few, wanted to satisfy the requirements of the community. They wanted to build dwellings matched to human needs, to erect a Cite Radieuse. But they had reckoned without the commercial instincts of the bourgeoisie who lost no time in arrogating their theories and pressing them into service for the purpose of money-making. Utility quickly became synonymous with profitability. Anti-academic forms became the new décor of the ruling classes. The rational dwelling was transformed into the minimum dwelling, the Cite Radieuse into the urban conglomeration and austerity of line into poverty of form... Modern architecture, which wanted to play a part in the liberation of mankind by creating a new environment to live in, was transformed into a giant enterprise for the degradation of the human habitat" (qt. in Frampton, 1992:287).

In Canada, similar arguments against Modernism began to take shape in the late 1960's and early 1970's. In response to the strict limitations that had become part of Modernist doctrine, and the plethora of generic urban skyscrapers that had emerged in the downtowns of Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, several regionally expressive styles developed across the country. Also around this time, Canadian architecture schools began to revisit their previously functionalist curricula and began re-referencing the past in comprehensive architectural history classes. Furthermore, practicing architects and academics in Canada "wrote polemics criticizing Modernism and seeking the way to a more socially relevant architectural style" (Kalman, 1994:845).

In sum, then, by the late 1970's, Canadian architects had embraced contextualization and the use of an expressive style to individualize their designs.

As well, architecture of this time made frequent reference to historical precedent. Modernism had unmistakably become the restrictive, dogmatic expression of a past establishment.

Since that time an awareness of, and respect for, Canada's Modern era has rematerialized. As already stated, the current design fashion is that of a sleek minimalism which directly references post-war design. However, a national interest in the *conservation* of mid-century architecture remains tentative. It appears that many Canadians find it challenging to value the recent past, and to situate the architecture of the recent past within heritage schemas that expressly favour the aged and romantic.

### **2.1.2 Arguments for Conservation**

The strongest argument for conserving Modern architecture has been aptly summarized by heritage activist Michael Kluckner, who stated, "...if you believe in heritage conservation, you believe that the best buildings of that [post-war] period should receive the same consideration as the 'heritage buildings' that are older. After all, how *does* anything get old?" (1991:87).

Another key contention for the pro-conservation forces is that the demonstrated socio-historical value of Modern architecture justifies its documentation and/or commemoration. Globally, Modernism was an influential structural manifestation of early- to mid-twentieth century values (as articulated in section 2.0 of this chapter). Most notably, Modernism can be regarded as "one of the great historical exercises in social idealism" and in its initial stages,

signified the advent of an architecture of equity (Nuttgens, 1988:1). As architectural historian Trevor Boddy wrote, "[i]n such early projects as Le Corbusier's housing or Gropius' units at the Siedlung demonstration project...the fathers of the Modern movement concerned themselves with issues of social change and mass-produced, inexpensive worker's housing" (Boddy, 1987:16). Though not always successful in form, this style and ideology represent a radical world-wide shift in theory and practice that attempted to "prove that a valid architecture...could be created for...the under-privileged no less than the privileged, for the mass and not just the individual, and at low cost rather than the handsome budgets of great historical works" (Nuttgens, 1988:2). As such, it warrants consideration within a more expansive perspective than simply the architectural culture immediately following it.

In Canada, the importance of the Modern movement can be considered in the context of post-war reconstruction and as an expression of mid-century social-democratic ideals (as articulated in sections 2.0.2 and 2.0.3 of this chapter). In particular, architects in British Columbia and Vancouver were celebrated for a distinct and well-developed West Coast style that responded to the residential, institutional, cultural, and commercial needs of a booming population and economy. Professor James Murray wrote in 1959:

"I must remind you that in Ontario, nay the rest of Canada... architects look to B.C. with respect and considerable envy, for we see...a promised land, a golden age so different from our own hectic commercialization, where architect and artist communicate and relate their work – where a genuine regionalism exists – where enlightened clients...support a dynamic and creative modern architecture" (JRAIC February 1959:38)

As such, it would be foolish to allow the elimination of all evidence of the Modern style before allowing a sufficient passage of time to take place, after which objective and considered studies could be undertaken.

The remaining Modern buildings in Vancouver represent a sound and distinguished civic architectural resource, and recall the time when the west coast commanded Canadian design. The public will likely want to reconsider these structures, if not now, then in the future. It is often the case that perspective is needed - of more than a few decades, sometimes - before people can fully appreciate a building, a genre, or an ideology. Vancouverite Trevor Boddy confirms that "Modernism represents what we were, and like it or lump it, we should know where we've been" (Boddy, *Vancouver Courier* November 5, 1997). Thus, when fixing boundaries and defining Vancouver's built heritage, its citizens would be wise to consider the city's comparative youth and thus defend its recent history. For these reasons, planning for the conservation of Vancouver's Modern architecture can be deemed a civic and cultural issue of vital importance.

A final issue to consider in discussing the conservation of Modern buildings in Vancouver is that support for the continued use of existing buildings cannot be underestimated within the local climate of sustainability. The flexibility employed in the design of many Modern buildings allows them to be adapted to new uses without tremendous difficulty. However, because Modern buildings often represent lower than existing density, and because of the high real-estate

prices in Vancouver, property developers have tended to favour demolition to rehabilitation.

These arguments are just some of the justifications advanced for conserving Modern architecture in Vancouver. However, it should be noted that not *all* Modern structures are worthy of conservation. For instance, it does not seem reasonable to equate Ron Thom's Copp house in Vancouver with a generic suburban "ranch" house. Just as with any other style, there exist superior and inferior articulations of the West Coast Style.

In sum then, because of the established significance of Modern design both globally and in Canada, and because of the current threats to such architecture, action should be taken to protect the finest buildings. As well, the less acclaimed examples should be thoroughly documented. Doing so would secure future opportunities to study and evaluate, both formally and socially, the "high" and "low" forms of Modernism. Thus the critical question is not, "Is Modern Architecture Worth Saving?" but rather, "*Which* buildings are worth saving?".

## **2.2 Chapter Summary**

This chapter outlined both the history of, and the arguments for and against, Modernism. While it is clear that this genre has had a contentious existence, it remains the dominant built expression of its era and that era's philosophies, and is thus of socio-historical importance. More importantly

though, this chapter serves to underline the significance of the Modern period in Vancouver.

## **Chapter 3 - Policies and Programs in Vancouver and Other North American Cities**

“You may not think of Vancouver’s post-1940’s buildings as heritage structures. They seem too new...[but] tastes change as buildings age. These buildings are the architectural heritage of the future” (Robin Ward 1995)

### **3.0 Recent Landmarks**

The Recent Landmarks initiative was one of the first comprehensive planning programs developed in North America to acknowledge the “important collection of buildings built in the decades [after] World War II” (“Recent Landmarks” brochure 1992). This program reinforced the growing belief that Vancouver’s post-war sites and buildings were “worthy of stretching the traditional notion of heritage” and sought to identify and document such buildings, considering “aesthetic and design value, innovative technological advances...and the contribution made by prominent Vancouver architects” (Ibid.).

Before the Recent Landmarks program was initiated, a more broad appraisal of heritage buildings had taken place across Vancouver in 1986, as part of the city’s centennial celebrations. This comprehensive evaluation documented approximately 2200 heritage buildings which were compiled as the Vancouver Heritage Inventory. However, as per the criteria of the Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings, these structures were required to have been built before 1940. Given Vancouver’s young age, this limited definition of heritage was inappropriate as it excluded the city’s legacy of post-war built resources,

many of which were considered "architectural and cultural landmarks" (Lemon and D'Agostini, 1993:31).

Eventually attention began to be focused on Vancouver's award-winning twentieth-century buildings when some of the more notable Modern structures (like C.B.K. Van Norman's "stylish, masterful" 1950 Canada Customs Building) were demolished to make way for new construction, and several others became threatened (the B.C. Hydro Building, the Main Library). Evidently the pressures of growth and high real-estate prices in Vancouver had outweighed concerns for the conservation of historic architecture, especially that of the recent past.

City planners were challenged to find means to save such structures, as "[n]o protection or development incentives were available to [post-war] buildings because they were not listed on the Vancouver Heritage Inventory" (ibid.:32). To address this situation, in 1989 Vancouver's Heritage Advisory Committee (VHAC) and City heritage planners embarked upon a formal process to identify and guard the city's important Modern architecture.

The first stage of this process involved raising public awareness. Vancouver's senior heritage planner at the time, noted that "in a young city, it is often hard to generate appreciation for turn-of-the-century buildings, let alone ones built a few decades ago" (ibid.:32). However the VHAC built on local design community efforts to promote Modernism, and used the 1990 Vancouver Heritage Awards to focus attention on "Our Recent Heritage".

The next step involved forming a steering committee (of local architects and VHAC members) to guide the process of devising and generating a recent



heritage program. Among other things, this committee compiled a primary list of buildings; agreed to use the evaluative criteria that was already in use for older buildings to assess Modern buildings; and identified an appropriate age - at least 20 years old - at which buildings could be considered for heritage status (Lemon, 1998:12). The committee also looked into the scope of Modern resources in Vancouver, as this era produced a range of new types of architecture ("gas stations, public housing complexes, shopping centres, motels") that needed to be considered for heritage commemoration alongside the more constant building forms ("houses, schools, hospitals, industrial buildings") (Bronson and Jester, 1997:5).

Based on the initial work of the VHAC and this steering committee, in late 1990 Vancouver City Council authorized City heritage planners to compile a civic inventory of post-1940's buildings. Subsequently planning staff and architecture students worked together to prepare evaluations of several hundred such buildings. City heritage planners remember that the:

"[i]nitial research identified a group of about 220 buildings...the criteria for selection was the same as for the older buildings already on the inventory, including the architectural, historical, and social significance of the building [using a weighted numerical evaluation system]. Considerable thought was given to stylistic periods and their classification...For comparative evaluation buildings were reviewed both by style and building type. The importance of a building's construction techniques or association with a noted designer were also considered" (Lemon and D'Agostini, 1993:32).

After this primary study and a staff review, some fine-tuning took place. For example, the initial list was trimmed and several residential buildings were

subsequently added. In the end, approximately 100 buildings were advanced for inclusion in the Recent Landmarks program and listing on the Heritage Inventory.

In 1992, "City Council formalized the 20 year age definition and adopted the list of 100 [Recent Landmark] buildings which met heritage criteria" (Lemon, 1998:12). At the present time, 20 of the initial 100 Recent Landmarks have been added to the Heritage Inventory (now known as the Vancouver Heritage Register), and three of these 20 buildings have been formally protected through designation: the former B.C. Hydro Building, the former Main Branch of the Vancouver Public Library, and the Kenneth Gardner House (see: Case Studies in Chapter 4).

### **3.1 Heritage Conservation Policy and Program**

#### ***3.1.1 Vancouver Heritage Bylaw and Policy***

While Recent Landmarks identifies a distinct group of post-1940 heritage resources, this program remains an integrated part of broader Vancouver conservation policies and programs. Landmarks from the post-1940's inventory that are successfully nominated are added to the larger Vancouver Heritage Register. Similarly, Vancouver's twentieth-century structures are subject to the same heritage policies and guidelines and are designated and protected in the same manner as the city's older buildings. Thus, it is essential to understand Vancouver's heritage conservation policies and programs in order to understand how the Recent Landmarks program functions within them.

The bylaw that governs heritage in Vancouver was created in 1974, when the B.C. Provincial Government passed the Heritage Conservation Act and transferred the control of heritage issues to the local level. At that time, the Vancouver Charter was amended "to enable the City to designate buildings, structures, and lands, and to regulate alterations to them" (City of Vancouver, *Heritage Fact Sheet* 3). The core statement of the Vancouver heritage bylaw reads as follows: "No person shall demolish...any building or structure so designated...nor shall any person alter...the façade or exterior of any building or structure which has been so designated unless such alteration...is authorized (City of Vancouver, *Heritage Bylaw* December 1974).

The most contentious aspect of the Heritage Conservation Act has been the issue of compensation, as the Act "required compensation for any economic loss deemed to have resulted from designation" (HSBC Newsletter Winter 98/99:6). Over time, this has "limited the use of designation power to 'friendly agreements' (Ibid.:6). In other words, all heritage designations in Vancouver are currently voluntary designations in exchange for non-monetary compensation. There have been no "involuntary" or unilateral heritage designations in Vancouver since the early 1970's.

New heritage legislation was passed by the Province in 1994 that once again amended the Vancouver Charter to provide the City with an "expanded legal protection toolkit" for heritage conservation (British Columbia Heritage Branch, 1995:5). This legislation, among other things, attempted to integrate planning and heritage conservation, and provided for more powerful incentives

(including tax exemptions and direct monetary grants, assuming the municipality has the financial resources) that could be used at the local level. Of those formalized in the 1994 legislation, the most commonly utilized tool has been the heritage revitalization agreement (HRA). In essence, an HRA is an "agreement negotiated between the City and an owner of heritage property... [that] outlines the duties, obligations, and benefits negotiated by both parties of the agreement" (City of Vancouver, *Heritage Fact Sheet 3*).

In terms of explicit written policy, City Council's decisions on protection and heritage designation are governed by the following:

- "The City's long-term goal is to protect, through voluntary designation, as many resources on the Vancouver Heritage Register as possible.
- Legal designation will be a prerequisite to an owner accepting certain bonuses and incentives.
- The City may initiate designation of buildings of extraordinary merit. Prior to proceeding with designation, the City will address the question of a compensation package to the owner" (City of Vancouver, *Heritage Fact Sheet 3*).

The voluntary nature of heritage designation in Vancouver is clearly discernible from these policy statements. While it remains debatable whether or not heritage structures and sites can be most effectively protected in a system based primarily on incentives, Vancouver has developed a serviceable conservation program to support its policy. Three components form Vancouver's Heritage Conservation Program: the Vancouver Heritage Register, the Heritage Management Plan, and the Public Information and Education Program.

### **3.1.2 Heritage Conservation Program**

#### **A. Vancouver Heritage Register**

The first component of the Heritage Conservation Program is the Vancouver Heritage Register (formerly "Inventory"). The Register includes approximately 2200 buildings, landscapes, monuments and archaeological sites that have significance to the city. The Register serves to record a range of heritage resources in Vancouver, from "worker's cottages and utilitarian warehouses to elaborately decorated mansions", thereby identifying the varied forms of development that have been important in the history of the city (City of Vancouver, *Heritage Fact Sheet 1*). The various ages of the buildings on the Register range from approximately 140 years old to twenty years old.

The process of adding to the Vancouver Heritage Register begins with the public nomination of a site or building, after which heritage planning staff carry out a review of the nomination and formally evaluate the site. A public consultation process – including formal notification, workshops, and public meetings - is normally undertaken with both owners of potential Heritage Register buildings and the general public. The staff evaluation is next examined by the Vancouver Heritage Commission (formerly the "VHAC") and "sites with sufficient heritage value or character are forwarded to Council for consideration" (City of Vancouver, *Heritage Fact Sheet 2*). Listing on the Register ensures that planners and the Commission are notified of any proposed changes, so that their commentary and advice may be relayed to Council (Ward. *Vancouver Sun* May 6, 1995) .

Not all heritage resources listed on the Register are designated. In fact, only 350 sites of the total 2200 have been (municipally or provincially) designated, and just 163 sites possess municipal designation (Ibid.). As a result, the majority of the buildings and sites listed on the Register *could*, in fact, be altered or demolished although the permits that would first have to be obtained could theoretically be withheld by City Council to allow time for other options to be fully explored.

#### B. Heritage Management Plan

The second component of Vancouver's Heritage Conservation Program is termed the Heritage Management Plan. This crucial element of heritage protection in Vancouver involves all of the "*incentives and protective measures* that are aimed at promoting the conservation of [the city's] heritage resources" (City of Vancouver, *Heritage Fact Sheet 2*). It is important to note that these incentives and protective measures are used in tandem. For example, bylaw relaxations could be offered in exchange for detailed restrictive measures outlined in a heritage revitalization agreement.

#### ▪ INCENTIVES

Incentives that are available to encourage the revitalization and continued use of heritage buildings include the following: relaxations of zoning bylaws,

subdivision bylaws, and/or parking bylaws; density bonuses and transfers; and permit fast tracking.

A bylaw relaxation allows the terms of a zoning, subdivision, or parking bylaw to be varied. For example, a single-family residential use zone may be varied to allow for the conversion of a single-family heritage house to a multi-unit dwelling. Such a variance would be allowed in order to offset the costs of retaining and upgrading the heritage building and thus encourage its rehabilitation. Another common example of a bylaw relaxation is allowing a development project to provide less than the legally required number of parking spots, so that the owners/developers may be compensated for performing heritage conservation work.

A density bonus is a tool used to allow a development project to have a floor area bonus - sometimes used on-site and sometimes transferred and sold off-site - to balance the costs of retaining heritage buildings. For example, building inefficiencies and required seismic, structural, and electrical upgrading often significantly add to heritage development expenses. Density bonuses are one way of offsetting this extraordinary outlay.

In Vancouver, heritage density bonuses are offered in exchange for the legal designation of a property thus allowing the City to then regulate any future changes (City of Vancouver, *Case Studies in Heritage Revitalization*). Heritage density bonuses are allowed in the Central Area district of Vancouver.

Density bonuses are calculated using a standardized system based on determining the value of the land with and without the heritage structure. The

essential formula is as follows: for each of the two scenarios (with and without heritage structure) the market value of the completed development is estimated; then hard (construction) costs and soft (professional fees etc.) costs are subtracted; the developer's profit is then subtracted; which leaves a figure equal to the residual value of the land. "The difference between the two values [i.e. with and without the heritage structure] indicates the dollar amount of compensat[ion]...By dividing this dollar amount by the market value of land per buildable square foot, the amount of required bonus space is estimated" (City of Vancouver. *Heritage Policies and Guidelines*).

The transfer of bonus density is governed by City policy, which reads, in part: "[r]ezoning applications or Heritage Revitalization Agreements...which involve the transfer of density from one site to another site will be considered, provided that such a transfer will assist in...preserv[ing] heritage buildings or sites listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register" (City of Vancouver, *Transfer of Density Policy and Procedure*). Furthermore, before a transfer of density can be approved, the proposed receiver site must be considered and comprehensively appraised to see whether it can suitably accommodate the additional density.

There are several articulated limitations on the transfer of density in Vancouver related to heritage conservation. For example, density may only be reassigned within the Central Area and on a portion of the Broadway corridor in the C-3A zone, and cannot be moved into HA-1 or HA-1A (Chinatown) zones. However, it is essential to note that heritage sites are the *only* exception to the rule that limits the number of sites involved in any given transfer of density



process to two, and the number of times a site can be involved in the transfer process to one.

Recent amendments to the transfer of density policy have allowed “residual and bonus density [to] be held on a heritage donor site through the use of a development limitation covenant” (Ibid.). This allows more flexibility in the density transfer process by allowing bonus density to be sold to a different site at an undetermined future time. However, Vancouver’s Director of Legal Services noted that density transfers are contingent on successful rezonings, which the City cannot guarantee in advance (City of Vancouver, *Memorandum* June 23, 1995). Thus while the bonus density gained from a heritage designation may be held on a donor site, it may be unsaleable if the development and rezoning that propose to use the density are unacceptable.

Finally, permit fast tracking is simply a process in which staff from different City departments work in tandem to guide a heritage development project through the relevant permitting stages, thereby attempting to avoid any undue hindrances or delays.

#### ▪ PROTECTIVE MEASURES

Protective measures available to encourage the revitalization and continued use of heritage buildings include: “legal heritage designation; heritage revitalization agreements; heritage alteration permits; heritage inspections; impact assessments; temporary protection; the withholding of approvals and permits; heritage control periods; and heritage site maintenance standards” (City

of Vancouver, *Heritage Fact Sheet 1*). The most commonly employed protective measures – designation, HRAs, and heritage alteration permits – are elaborated upon in the following paragraphs. It is important to note that while tools like designation and HRAs are protective, they are not unilaterally initiated by the City. Both tools are typically finalized following the negotiation of compensatory incentives.

The City of Vancouver's planning department defines legal heritage designation as one "tool of heritage protection which allows the City to regulate, by bylaw, the demolition, relocation, or alteration of heritage property". While "Council can consider [unilateral] designation as a means of protection for heritage property, in practice, most [all, since 1977] designations are agreed to by building owners in exchange for incentives" (City of Vancouver, *Heritage Fact Sheet 2*). Vancouver's heritage bylaw distinguishes between two types of municipal designation: schedule "A" indicates that the "building's exterior can be fully protected from inappropriate alteration", and schedule "B" includes "protection for specific features or portions of a building" (City of Vancouver, *Heritage Fact Sheet 3*). Work is ongoing to establish a system of management and protection for heritage interiors.

While the obvious goal of designation is to protect heritage property from insensitive modification or destruction, it is often necessary to alter or upgrade a heritage building for continued use or for a new use. "Careful review of any change is required in order to maintain the integrity of the [designated] building... and any alterations require the issuance of a Heritage Alteration Permit" (Ibid.).

Thus, despite the implicit assurances of heritage designation, even the most highly valued designated buildings are potentially vulnerable to demolition.

Consider the following statement from Vancouver City Council:

“Council has instructed that, prior to consideration of a proposal for the demolition of an “A” building, a formal independent consultant’s report on the physical condition and economic viability of retaining the building should be reviewed by the Director of Planning” (City of Vancouver, *Heritage Policies and Guidelines*).

In essence, then, “heritage designation is not an agreement between owner and government to conserve the heritage values of a property. It is a land control regulation that gives Council discretionary power which, if they choose to exercise it, can be used to protect heritage property” (HSBC Newsletter Winter 98/99:7). Thus the fate of a threatened heritage building, even if designated, is ultimately dependant upon the heritage conservation sensibilities and sympathies of the current Council.

A heritage revitalization agreement, as previously mentioned, is a legal agreement which details the unique and specific obligations of both the private property owner and the municipal government entering into the particular HRA.

An HRA is used as:

“a mechanism to secure the retention of a heritage building and guarantee its proper rehabilitation. An HRA is similar to heritage designation in that it legally protects the building from demolition, however the HRA has additional power to vary or supplement provisions of a zoning, subdivision, or heritage conservation bylaw, and/or development permit” (City of Vancouver, *Heritage Fact Sheet 4*).

Each individual HRA is drafted by the City’s Law Department and is intended to be “a powerful and flexible tool specifically written to suit unique properties and

situations” (Ibid.). Once the City has filed notice with the Land Titles office on the title of the land to be covered, the conditions of the HRA override existing zoning (Ibid).

Despite the flexible and powerful status of the HRA, several municipalities have identified problems that will require fine tuning in the negotiation of future HRAs. These include making sure that good rehabilitation practices are enforced via the HRA contract; finding means to reassure the public that the benefits negotiated for the developer in the HRA are not unfair; and synchronizing the goals of the HRA with those of City staff charged with enforcing building codes (HSBC Newsletter Winter 98/99:8).

Finally, a heritage alteration permit is a means through which to “authorize changes to protected heritage properties” (British Columbia Heritage Branch, 1995: 5). Such permits are often used to formalize development requirements and rehabilitation particulars.

### C. Public Information and Education Program

The third component of Vancouver’s heritage conservation program is the Public Information and Education Program. This aspect of the heritage conservation program aspires to inform the public on heritage issues and increase the profile of heritage projects with awards and commemorative plaques.

### **3.1.3 Vancouver Heritage Foundation**

An additional City-related program that has the potential to augment heritage planning efforts and influence heritage conservation and awareness in Vancouver is the Vancouver Heritage Conservation Foundation. The Foundation is a "private, non-profit charitable organization created by the City of Vancouver in 1992" to "promote the preservation, maintenance, and restoration" of significant heritage properties in the city (City of Vancouver, *Heritage Fact Sheet* 9). Although somewhat dormant for several years, the Foundation has recently been revitalized with a new Chair and Board of Directors. The "new" Foundation has already developed a greater public profile with such projects as the recent Heritage and Antiques Fair. It remains to be seen, however, whether the Foundation will receive sufficient financial support from the public to sustain its support for local heritage endeavours.

### **3.2 Provincial Heritage Designation in Vancouver**

In 1971, before the City was ceded power for heritage issues, the Provincial government unilaterally designated two heritage downtown districts of Vancouver in response to concern over the redevelopment of this unique urban fabric. This was a large-scale protection effort, as the designated historic areas - Gastown and Chinatown - comprised 230 individual properties. By virtue of heritage area designation, these quarters became subject to special zoning, articulated guidelines, and alteration/development reviews.

In 1977, the administrative and permitting responsibilities for Gastown and Chinatown were delegated from provincial authorities to Vancouver's Director of Planning in an attempt to unite planning and the management of the city's historic resources (City of Vancouver, *Heritage Fact Sheet 6*).

Nonetheless, the web of issues caused by the two different jurisdictions and policies has never been sufficiently resolved. Today Gastown and Chinatown remain the only Provincial heritage designations in the City of Vancouver, and a joint planning process is underway to determine the feasibility of devolving full responsibility for these areas to the City so that integration and consistency may be increased.

### **3.3 Policies and Programs From Other Cities**

The Recent Landmarks initiative is well-known in the heritage planning field and, in combination with Vancouver's broader heritage program, is considered to be a progressive framework for identifying and commemorating the city's twentieth century buildings. In the last decade, several other North American cities have started planning for the conservation and protection of their meritorious post-war buildings. To provide a comparative source of information against which to gauge Vancouver's program, and to explore potential new tools and ideas from other municipalities, planners and heritage advocates in six North American cities were polled for this thesis. Each response was evaluated to determine whether the given city had formally incorporated Modern architecture into its heritage programs and/or policies. As noted in Chapter 1,

representatives in Toronto, Victoria, New York, Los Angeles, and Phoenix were consulted. While Appendix 3 provides full questionnaire responses, this section of the thesis presents an overview of the results. It should be noted that some responses to the questionnaire were more comprehensive than others and that this disparity is reflected in the following paragraphs.

- **DISTINCT PROGRAMS FOR MODERN LANDMARKS**

The most striking research finding was that *none* of the surveyed cities have created specialized inventories or programs to treat the conservation of twentieth century architecture akin to Vancouver's Recent Landmarks (with the possible exception of Toronto, which, when amalgamating surrounding municipalities into the new mega-city, inherited the progressive work that North York had done in this domain). The most common justification cited for the lack of specific programming was that municipal heritage planning staff are already overburdened by work on existing heritage programs. It appears that there is simply no surplus money, time, or energy to invest in developing or enforcing new initiatives.

Although none of these cities have dedicated heritage programs or policies for post-war architecture, all of the cities (with the exception of Victoria) reported that Modern buildings *are* eligible for both listing on heritage inventories and protection via heritage designation. Planners in Toronto, New York, Los Angeles, and Phoenix have commemorated post-war landmarks within the frameworks of their broader heritage programs. For example, all of these cities

have International Style architecture listed on their heritage inventories, and in many cases, the buildings have been protected with legal designation.

The examples of New York City and Toronto offer further insight on this issue. New York City has had to carefully address this issue given that city's large number of twentieth century landmarks. There are several Modern buildings recorded on the New York City Landmark listings of over 20,000 buildings, and in general, the "icons" of Modern architecture have been acknowledged as valuable and formally designated with some degree of public support (notable examples include the Seagram Building and Lever House).

Similarly, Toronto has both listed and designated Modern buildings on its registry. Out of 5000 listed buildings, approximately 60 are post-war structures. In terms of actually protecting modern buildings, success appears to vary from city to city. The Coordinator of DOCOMOMO Ontario felt that the jury was still out in Toronto. He noted that important Modern buildings have been designated, thus indicating some success, yet some of these same buildings were later demolished despite their implied protection.

- EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

In each of the six cities consulted for this thesis one constant set of criteria has been developed to measure the value of both aged and recent heritage. Thus in the cities canvassed, Modern buildings must meet the same high standards as older structures in order to receive landmark status.



For example, in New York the primary criterion for heritage commemoration is age, and then a complex set of evaluative indicators are measured in each case. Naturally, these criteria can be influenced by the political climate, the relative importance of the occupant, or the importance of the original purpose of the building. This also appears to be the case in Los Angeles, Phoenix, and Victoria.

Likewise, in Toronto, the same set of guidelines is used to determine inclusion on the City's Inventory of Heritage Properties, regardless of type or age. However, buildings less than ten years cannot be considered for heritage status. The Coordinator of DOCOMOMO Ontario noted that it has been difficult to establish the legitimacy of some post-war buildings in Toronto using this universal framework. He stated, "Little documentation or scholarly research is available to convince skeptics of the significance of faded Modern buildings – and there appear to be so many of them..."

- **RESPONSIBILITY FOR HERITAGE ISSUES**

Jurisdiction for the protection of heritage buildings seems to be relatively consistent across all surveyed cities. In general, the responsibility for heritage conservation belongs to local government. For example, in Toronto, civic jurisdiction for heritage buildings is authorized by the Province, as the Ontario Heritage Act delegates this responsibility to municipalities in that province. Similarly, in New York, heritage protection is a local issue that is handled by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. The only exception to this

rule (in American cities) may be in the case that Federal legislation is used, but this form of protection remains highly honorary in nature.

- PLANNING TOOLS

All of the surveyed cities use a combination of both planning incentives and protective measure to safeguard their heritage resources. However, each municipality appears to lean toward one approach or the other. For example, according to the senior Heritage Toronto preservationist, "Ontario relies heavily on sticks rather than carrots". More specifically, while the City of Toronto has employed some incentives in the past, in the last decade the economic and political situation shifted in this city thus necessitating the use of more prohibitive planning tools. New York also favours prohibitive measures, in particular, formal designation. It seems that several incentives have been proposed and discussed for possible use in New York, but few remain available. One incentive that is used fairly commonly for landmark structures in this city is the transfer of air rights.

On the other hand, though Victoria's policy does not apply to Modern buildings, this city has developed a good incentives strategy to encourage the heritage conservation of the city's more aged buildings. Financial incentives include grants and tax exemptions, and other incentives include density bonuses and transfers. Grants may be received to assist with the revitalization - including façade restoration, structural improvements, re-roofing, seismic upgrading, woodwork, and exterior painting - of commercial and residential buildings. Tax

incentives became available in Victoria in 1998, setting a precedent in B.C..

Under this program, property tax exemptions may be allowed for up to ten years to compensate for upgrade expenses.

Similar to Victoria, Los Angeles appears to employ incentive schemes.

For example, zoning regulations for historic properties may be flexible – allowing nonconforming uses and reduced parking requirements amongst other things.

Heritage buildings may also be eligible for property tax reductions.

- **PUBLIC AND POLITICAL SUPPORT**

Most cities appear to have fluctuating public and political support for heritage policies. The DOCOMOMO Ontario Coordinator noted that in general, politicians respond to public pressure and on the whole in Toronto the public does not appear to value most Modern buildings. Heritage Toronto's senior preservationist summed up the political context in Toronto by stating that "[b]etween [Premier] Mike Harris and [Mayor] Mel Lastman, the Philistines are winning". The President of DOCOMOMO US noted that the issue of protecting Modern landmarks in New York and other large U.S. cities, where real estate values are high and development pressures are great, remains a significant topic in need of attention.

### **3.4 Chapter Summary**

At the time of its inception, Vancouver's Recent Landmarks was a groundbreaking planning initiative in that it formally acknowledged the historic

importance of post-war architecture. Though the Recent Landmarks inventory recognizes a discrete set of post-1940 heritage resources, it is embedded in the City's larger conservation policies and programs. The three components of Vancouver's Heritage Conservation Program - the Vancouver Heritage Register, the Heritage Management Plan, and the Public Information and Education Program - contain constructive tools that have been used to support heritage conservation planning efforts in Vancouver. In recent years, the most common and successful heritage conservation scenario in this city has involved the use of various non-monetary incentives to secure the voluntary heritage designation of a building or site.

In terms of other municipalities, it is clear - based on the information provided by the survey respondents - that the majority of cities consulted for this thesis do recognize Modern architecture as meaningful built heritage. Toronto, New York, Los Angeles, and Phoenix have all commemorated (with either listing on a civic registry or official heritage designation) significant local post-war buildings. Victoria was the only city surveyed that has not yet included any post-war buildings or sites on its inventory of historic places.

Interestingly, though almost all of the surveyed cities have acknowledged the heritage value of Modern architecture, none have created specific initiatives, policies, inventories, or educational programs (akin to Vancouver's Recent Landmarks study and inventory) to address this resource. Instead it appears that in these cities, post-war buildings are simply considered within broader heritage planning frameworks.

## **Chapter 4 – Case Studies**

“The B.C. Electric Building was...an attempt to find an urban idiom for the West Coast that was regional as well as Modern” (Ron Thom 1983)

The Vancouver Public Library was designed “to create a structure that would both invite and serve the citizens of the city” (Semmens + Simpson 1957)

### **4.0 Introduction**

Vancouver heritage planners recognized local Modern buildings with the Recent Landmarks inventory. The following case studies are examples of how this inventory and the incentive-based City heritage policy have been used to protect two noteworthy Modern buildings.

### **4.1 The B.C. Electric/Hydro Building**

#### **4.1.1 Context**

##### **Heritage Value**

Built between 1955 and 1957, the former B.C. Hydro Building (originally called the B.C. Electric Building) is one of the most striking buildings of the post-war building boom in British Columbia. Designed by well-known architects Ned Pratt and Ron Thom of the pre-eminent local firm Thompson Berwick and Pratt, this building is an excellent example of West Coast Modern architecture.

The development of the B.C. Hydro Building sped the growth of Vancouver's new downtown core by “pulling the city's business district toward it” (Davis, 1997:113). At 21 storeys, it was the tallest building in the city when completed and towered over neighboring wood-frame houses. Furthermore its

sleek Modern design and progressive materials evoked the fabric of a futuristic metropolis, causing the surrounding built form to appear heavy and dated. Fully lit up in the dark, this building was a visible reminder of the strength of B.C.'s resource-based economy and was noted for its "beacon of light and power" effect at night (TCA April 1957).

The most distinctive feature of the Hydro Building remains its lozenge shape. Other notable elements include the subtly proportioned green glass and painted metal spandrel curtain wall; reinforced concrete service core supporting cantilevered floors; slim metal exterior piers; and illuminated blue and green saw-tooth fins on the east and west elevations (City of Vancouver, *Heritage Resource Inventory Form* for 970 Burrard). Very few alterations were made to the building over the years, other than the replacement of the glazing in the 1960's and the addition of a reflective film to the windows in the 1980's (Ibid.).

The Hydro Building nicely illustrates particular elements of the West Coast style. For instance, the Pacific ocean and B.C. forests were evoked in its colours and decorative features. B.C. Binning, a local artist and proponent of Modernism, designed mosaic tile murals and patterned tiling that referred to the natural colours of the Pacific Northwest, thus "keeping the building in harmony with the grey-green-blue landscape of this rainy city" (TCA April 1957).

In addition to its architectural distinction, the Hydro Building also has socio-historical importance to Vancouver. The conception and development of the Hydro Building has been credited to Dal Grauer, then-president of B.C. Electric and considered one of Vancouver's visionaries. Grauer created a

distinctive landmark with the new headquarters for this hydro-electric company, but also a pleasant work space that afforded Hydro employees every modern convenience. For example, Grauer influenced office layout and social organization by challenging the tradition that allowed only senior staff access to natural light and window views. Grauer declared that in the new Hydro Building, no employee "would sit more than 15 feet from a window", thereby improving the working environment of the (largely female) support staff (JRAIC May 1956).

#### Site Description

The Hydro Building, at 970 Burrard Street, is located on a downtown site on the edge of Vancouver's Central Business District, with side elevations on Burrard and Hornby Streets and the front facing Nelson Street. Formerly zoned Downtown District (DD), this building and the adjacent parcel of land were rezoned in 1993 to allow for conversion to new uses. Both the Hydro building and the neighbouring site were rezoned Comprehensive Development (CD-1). This zoning chiefly governs use, height, and the maximum floor space ratio for the allowed uses. This site is also subject to the Central Area Plan. This is important to note as the revitalization of the Hydro building was compatible with that plan's directive to support the conversion of commercial to residential uses in order to facilitate the retention of heritage buildings.

#### **4.1.2 Revitalization**

##### Program

In May of 1993, a development application was submitted to Vancouver's planning department which proposed modifying the B.C. Hydro Building for residential use. The intent of this project was to rehabilitate and upgrade the building and convert it to 242 diversely sized strata-titled condominium units. Accommodation units would occupy the third to twenty-first floors, the first two floors would contain office space, and pedestrian oriented retail would be introduced along Hornby Street. The building's two below-grade floors were to be partially used by B.C. Hydro, as well as modified for resident facilities and storage. The existing lobby and open space were to be maintained and a full range of amenities were to be added. Partington Real Estate Advisors noted that at the time, this proposal - transforming an office building to apartments - was unique in Canada and possibly North America.

##### Level of Conservation

As this project involved the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the Hydro Building for a new use, it can be classified, in conservation terms, as an *adaptive re-use rehabilitation* development (see: Definitions, section 1.5, Chapter 1). In simple terms, the building was converted to a new use because it had outlived its previous function. Though less sensitive than preservation or restoration, adaptive re-use makes a contemporary use possible while preserving significant features of the structure (Oberlander et al, 1989:13)



The major change made to the Hydro Building was the removal and replacement of its glass and metal curtain wall. Because the existing single-glazed curtain wall had deteriorated and had no opening vents, the installation of new cladding was necessary to allow the residents fresh air. Care was taken to make sure that the new exterior echoed the patterns and colours of the original, nevertheless there was considerable debate between the architect, City planning staff, and the Vancouver Heritage Advisory Commission over the changes made to glazing and spandrel proportions. Other alterations made to the building included the restoration of the mosaic tile work; reconfiguring the floor plans to accommodate residential use, storage, and laundry; installing new walls, plumbing and electrical systems; rearranging access points to allow for a separate residential entry; and changing the cafeteria into a communal outdoor terrace.

### Incentives

In July of 1993, City Council approved (with stated conditions) the rezoning of the Hydro Building at 970 Burrard, as well as the 900 block Burrard Street. This parcel of land constitutes the Hydro Building, an adjacent electrical substation, and a surface parking lot. The block was rezoned from DD zoning to the more interpretive CD-1. The new maximum FSR for the Hydro Building was 7.6, which reflected the existing FSR of the building. The new maximum FSR for the 900 block site was 8.5, but limited by covenant to 7.5.

The Hydro project was the first case in which the incentive of transferable density was applied to the revitalization and designation of a Recent Landmark in Vancouver. The bonus was negotiated based on compensating the developer for the added costs of rehabilitation, and because there was "100,000 sq. ft. less marketable residential space than a potential new building on that site" due to the lower density of the existing Hydro building (City of Vancouver, *Memorandum* August 10, 1993). The bonus density amounted to approximately 150,000 square feet of floor space, which was banked for future use on the 900 block Burrard site adjacent to the Hydro Building. However, as the maximum FSR had been limited to 7.5 on this site, a residual 60,000 square feet was deemed transferable to another acceptable site in Vancouver. To date, much of this density has been sold and transferred to another downtown site.

Other incentives included waiving the Community Amenity Contribution, and having the tiled mosaic art work restored in lieu of a Public Art Allocation. Both of these public requirements are normally assessed in major rezonings in the downtown area. In return for this package of incentives the Hydro Building was legally designated in November of 1993 and added to the Vancouver Heritage Register as a Recent Landmark of Class "A" merit. Any subsequent alterations made to the building thus are subject to heritage legislation.

#### ***4.1.3 Economic Viability***

The proposal to change the function of the Hydro Building from commercial to residential was based on two factors: the building's layout and real

estate market conditions. Because of the floor plate with the central service core, the building was not an efficient multi-tenant office space and no single tenant had expressed leasing interest. As well, Vancouver's slow office market would have prevented the developers from charging the necessary rents to support their financial investment. However market studies had shown that there was a demand for small, affordable condominium units in the downtown core, and the Hydro Building's design was open and flexible. Thus conversion to residential use was both structurally appropriate and economically sound. In response to this proposed innovative use for his original design, architect Ned Pratt stated, "I kept wondering what was going to happen to the dear old thing. I was scared the old whore would be sitting for years with [only] a 60 watt bulb hanging" (Freedman, *Globe and Mail* August 21, 1993)

In personal interviews from late 1998, architect Paul Merrick noted that though the compensation received for this project was fair, it did not fully offset rehabilitation costs. Terry Partington, representative of the developers, reiterated this sentiment and stated that initially the expenses of revitalization had negatively impacted the financial viability of the project. He noted that the project had not yet realized the value of the bonus density it was awarded. However Mr. Partington confirmed that "The Electra" residential development had been very saleable (the entire project sold out in one weekend, before construction had even begun) and that the heritage value and distinction of the building had contributed to its marketability.

#### **4.1.4 Conservation Evaluation**

This thesis used three measures to gauge the success of the revitalization of the Hydro Building, namely whether or not:

- sensitivity was shown to the building site and context;
- existing materials were rehabilitated, and new materials were appropriately used; and,
- new architectural elements were sympathetically introduced.

The building's context was well respected, as the siting and configuration remained the same. As well, the Hydro Building's landmark qualities were enshrined because of a binding agreement that dictates the form of development for the 900 block Burrard.

In terms of the larger context, the conversion from office to residential use is well supported by the fact that there are other residential developments in close proximity. This project can be viewed as a progressive step towards reusing surplus office space and providing more accessibly priced condominiums on the downtown peninsula.

Heritage materials, like the mosaic tiles, were carefully restored by the son of the original tile-setter. New materials, like the exterior cladding, were added in as sensitive a manner as possible. Though the new windows are larger than their predecessors, the overall effect of the curtain wall remains true to the original. As Vancouver's senior heritage planner at the time stated, "the new opening vents and the subtle shifting of the glazing proportions speak to the evolution of the building to its new life as The Electra" (note to architect, July 1994).

#### **4.1.5 Feedback**

Paul Merrick confirmed that this project had progressed efficiently, and had, overall, been a positive experience. He spoke to the united aspirations of his design team, the developers, City Council, and staff, and of the concerted efforts made to restore the building. Mr. Merrick also discussed the replacement of the curtain wall and how he had hoped to "further lighten the effect of the glazing". However, in the end he largely consented to the glazing and spandrel proportions advocated by heritage planning staff and the Heritage Advisory Commission.

Developer Terry Partington, commenting more generally on Vancouver's Heritage Conservation Program, argued that more direct forms of compensation should be introduced to assist with preservation costs such as credits against development fees and taxes.

## **4.2 The Vancouver Public Library (Former Main Branch)**

### **4.2.1 Context**

#### **Heritage Value**

At the time of its completion in 1957, the former main branch of the Vancouver Public Library was considered the city's foremost model of a new rational institutional architecture, and was subsequently awarded the Massey Award for excellence in Canadian architecture. Designed by Vancouver firm Semmens and Simpson, the Library was conceived within a post-war Canadian

socio-political climate that advanced social equity. This meant that public buildings, libraries in particular, could no longer afford to be "remote institutions holding no attraction for the working man ... [nor housed] in monumental buildings with turrets and towers, and airs of aloofness" (then Vancouver City Librarian E.S. Robinson, qt. in Windsor-Liscombe, 1997:96). Rather, mid-century Canadian architects believed that public institutions were better articulated in the anti-hierarchical Modern style to "allow public understanding of purpose and internal function and counter the psychological and socio-economic barriers associated with such cultural institutions" (Ibid.:98). Accordingly, the design for Vancouver's library reflected this new spirit of inclusion – it was a symbolically and literally transparent building designed for accessibility and interaction.

In addition to the broader Canadian social milieu, Semmens and Simpson's Library can be considered in the specific context of Vancouver in 1957. Still relatively undeveloped by contemporary North American standards, the city's downtown peninsula contained a small but established business district and a new emergent central core. Situated at the corner of Burrard and Robson streets, the Main Library was planned to be an urban oasis at the epicenter of this new economic and cultural hub.

In terms of style, the rigidly geometrical form of the Library and its emphasis on enclosure of space echoed the avant-garde German Bauhaus movement. However, other characteristics of the building reflected a more regional orientation. For example the Vancouver designers were familiar with the

intimately local mandate for the building and were able to reflect the egalitarian aspirations of post-war Vancouverites in built form. As well, the exterior bronze sculpture and the interior wall mosaic – which constituted the adornment of the Library - were both created by Vancouver artist Lionel Thomas.

The Library became a symbol of economical and technological innovation. Extensive research had informed the design of such novel elements as the vertical sunscreen louvers; the reinforced concrete structural system (and its capacity to support an additional floor, if necessary); and the heating and air conditioning systems which used steam from the Hotel Vancouver (Windsor-Liscombe, New Spirit Symposium 1997). Other distinctive features of the Library included the extensive glass façades that exposed interior space; the balanced composition of “contrasting solids and voids” and horizontal and vertical elements; the thick granite base; and the harmonized relationship of this building to its setting, in particular, the historic Hotel Vancouver (City of Vancouver, *Heritage Evaluation Form* for 750 Burrard).

#### Site Description

The Library building, at 750 Burrard Street, is located on a downtown site in the Central Business District and faces Burrard and Robson streets. Formerly zoned Downtown District (DD), this parcel of land was rezoned in November of 1993 to Comprehensive Development (CD-1). The site is subject to the Downtown Official Development Plan (DODP) and the Central Area Plan. Notably, the proposed uses of retail and office remained consistent with both

plans as the DODP and Central Area Plans both require retail use along Robson Street and the DODP also encourages retail along Burrard Street (City of Vancouver, *Administrative Report* December 1, 1994).

#### **4.2.2 Revitalization**

##### **Background**

In 1991 it was determined that the Library's book-holding capacity was over-burdened (however it remained a well-used civic institution until 1995), and a new main branch of the Vancouver Public Library was commissioned and put to competition among North America's architectural elite. To raise construction funds (\$30 million was earmarked from the sale of the existing Library), the City's Real Estate and Housing Department advocated marketing the sale of the Library with "advanced approval for demolition" (Magee, *Vancouver Courier* August 16, 1992). At a prime downtown axis, the Library property was considered underdeveloped and encumbered by the existing low-density building.

Those opposing the demolition of the Library included the Director of Planning, heritage planners, the Vancouver Heritage Advisory Committee, and several architecture and heritage advocates. As well, objections from the general public mounted, aided by extensive print media coverage on the fate of the building in the *Vancouver Sun*, *Vancouver Province*, *Vancouver Courier*, and *Globe and Mail*. While the Library was not initially entitled to any heritage protection because of its relatively young age, in preliminary Recent Landmarks



studies the extraordinary qualities of the Library had been recognized and it was anticipated that it would be nominated as a class "A" heritage building.

The Vancouver Heritage Advisory Committee had recommended that the Library be the first post-1940's building placed on the Heritage Inventory and asked Council to consider other financing options for the new library. Statements made by Councilor Gordon Price in February 1992 were the first signs that Council had an interest in saving the Library. At that time, he was publicly offering "four compelling arguments for preserving the VPL" (*Vancouver Courier* February 19, 1992). In October of 1992, recognizing a growing public interest in the Library, Council allowed the Library to be listed for sale but instructed staff to "actively pursue alternatives which would allow for the preservation and adaptive re-use of the existing library building" (City of Vancouver, *Standing Committee of Council on City Services and Budgets* October 1, 1992). At the same time, Council resolved to allow the Library supporters to create a task force "to pursue creative options to retain the existing library building, and consider funding opportunities for the new library building" (Ibid.).

In January of 1993, as part of ongoing discussions pertaining to the sale of the Library, real estate brokers CB Commercial Real Estate reported that an excess of office space in Vancouver's downtown core had dramatically lessened the value of the Library site for new office construction. This timely intervention of market pressures, combined with the formalization of the Recent Landmarks

post-1940's study in late 1992, presented heritage planners and advocates with a strong opportunity to push for the preservation and designation of this building.

In July of 1993 Vancouver's City Council approved the sale of the Library to an Ontario pension fund for \$23.5 million, after having heard other development schemes and been presented with other offers. However, "a condition for the closing of the sale of the Library was the municipal heritage designation of the building" (City of Vancouver, *Administrative Report* December 1, 1994). This occurred in December of 1994, when the Library was legally designated and added to the Vancouver Heritage Register as a class "A" building.

### Program

In May of 1995, the City received a development application from the development agents of the pension fund to convert the Library structure to retail/restaurant/office use. The plan was to house a \$54 million commercial development in the rehabilitated Library building. Because the development application applied to a designated heritage property, approval was subject to several conditions, including Council's approval of the form of development.

This application proposed designing a new rooftop structure to accommodate a restaurant. The ground and basement levels of the building would contain retail use, and it was projected that the remaining three floors would house a combination of commercial and office uses. As well, the atrium at the corner of Robson and Burrard Streets would be extended to the new fifth floor.

The alterations proposed to adapt the Library to its new commercial purpose included adding to the upper storey; replacing the exterior skin (with little change in colour or materials); reconfiguring the interior space to allow for new patterns of circulation; installing new walls, plumbing and electrical systems; performing seismic and other safety code upgrades; cutting into the granite base to reveal more retail frontage; removing the corner entry doors; removing the louvers; and removing the interior tiled mosaic mural (City of Vancouver, *Administrative Report* June 14, 1995, and *Notes from Vancouver Heritage Commission Design Review Committee Meeting* December 4, 1995).

#### Level of Conservation

As this development involved the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the Library building for a new use, it - like the Hydro Building project - can be classified as *adaptive re-use rehabilitation*. However, because of the significant interventions made to the Library it can also be classified as a renovation project. While there were regulatory imperatives to retain the building, and a stated intent on the part of the developers to ensure that its essential form and style were preserved, the Library's new function as high-profile retail space evidently necessitated making some radical adjustments.

The major changes made to the Library were the addition of new rooftop space and the removal and replacement of its glass and metal curtain wall. Other alterations made to the building included the interventions described in the "Program" section, as well as the rehabilitation and seismic upgrade of the

structure; the removal of the central stair and elevator core; restoration of the exterior sculpture; and the addition of contentious new signage (City of Vancouver, *Notes from Vancouver Heritage Commission Design Review Committee Meeting* December 4, 1995).

### Incentives

In November of 1993, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the sale of the Library, Council approved the rezoning of the Library property from DD, which allowed a maximum FSR of 9, to CD-1, which in this case allowed a maximum density of 13.17 FSR (9 FSR existing and 4.17 FSR heritage bonus density) (City of Vancouver, *Policy Report Development and Building* August 24, 1993). As the Library building represented an FSR of only 5.46, the residual density would be stored on site until a donor site in the Central Area could be located and a sale negotiated.

The most significant heritage retention incentive offered to the developers of the Library project was this large density bonus. This bonus was based directly on countering the financial losses inherent in retaining the existing low-density building on a site that officially permitted higher densities, and compensating for the added costs involved in heritage conservation. In this case the bonus amounted to 195,000 square feet, all of which was to be transferred off site (to date, almost all of the Library's transferable density has been sold). In essence, the sizeable density bonus made it possible for the City to get a

purchase price on the Library building that was sufficient to aid the construction of the new library - without having to demolish the old Library for redevelopment.

As well, parking requirements for the Library project were appreciably relaxed. Because no on-site parking had existed in the past, there was no practical or economical method of constructing parking at that congested location.

In addition, no Community Amenity Contribution was assessed because there was no increase in residential density with the rezoning of 750 Burrard (City of Vancouver, *Policy Report Development and Building* August 24, 1993). The Public Art Allocation requirement was satisfied by the proposal to "refurbish of the building's exterior façade" (Ibid.).

In return for the rezoning and incentives, the Library was legally designated a heritage structure and any subsequent alterations made to it (excluding the granite base, louvers, and mural) became subject to heritage legislation.

#### **4.2.3 Conservation Evaluation**

The same three measures used in this thesis to gauge the success of the Hydro Building were used to assess the Library revitalization, namely whether or not:

- sensitivity was shown to the building site and context;
- existing materials were rehabilitated, and new materials were appropriately used; and,
- new architectural elements were sympathetically introduced.

The "Robson Central" retail complex has now been open for several years in the renovated Library building and is integrated into its shopping and tourist location. The building's footprint remains the same and the appearance of the new structure is in the spirit of the old. Importantly, by retaining this building, a distinct view of the well-known Hotel Vancouver has been preserved. A replacement structure would surely have maximized allowable density, and thus have been of a height and volume to block the Hotel. Thus the relationship of the renovated Library building to its site and context remains true to the original.

In rehabilitating the Library, the existing materials were largely replaced by new ones. While a practical solution, this method contravenes the very essence of preservation and raises the larger issue of whether Modernist buildings were intended for long-term use and whether or not it is appropriate to rehabilitate inexpensive deteriorated materials that were not meant for renewal. For example, on the west coast, "aluminum corrodes badly in the damp air, and enamel panels [quickly become] stained and dirty" (Kluckner, 1991:87). Such a technical question is beyond the scope of this thesis but there exists an emerging sub-field of scholarship that is currently examining these issues, most notably within preservation technology (see: Burman, Stratton).

Irrespective of this broader debate, comments can be made on the specific use of new materials in this case study. All in all, it seems that new materials were used in an effective manner to reproduce the style of the old library structure. Subtle changes were made to the glazing proportions and finishes were adjusted, but overall the new materials reflect the fundamental

nature of the old. At completion, Vancouver's senior heritage planner opined that the "original design has been respectfully conserved" (1998:13).

New architectural elements were introduced to the Library building in a less sympathetic manner than had been desired. Retail consultants determined that the Library required modifications for it to function successfully as retail space (as already detailed). However, many of these changes appreciably changed the building. One of the most problematic elements was the addition of "showy" signage, which compromised the restrained aesthetic of the original design. Windsor-Liscombe commented that such "make-up" had "turned a virgin into a harlot" (qt. in Ward, *Georgia Straight* November 6-13, 1997). Likewise, the granite base that grounded the light, cubic form of the building was perforated with large windows to provoke pedestrian interest at grade. Finally, one of the most socially significant features of the Library - its transparency - was eliminated. In its new incarnation, the building's open glazing at the key Robson and Burrard streets corner is obscured by an interior wall constructed by the main floor retail tenants. This drastic interior modification, though perfectly legal, did not appear in any of the design drawings and was thus not anticipated by City staff. This controversial issue served to underscore the need to consider heritage interiors in future heritage designation processes.

#### 4.2.4 Feedback

Though a striking piece of Vancouver's Modern history was salvaged, there has been lingering controversy over the negotiated solution that allowed the Library building to be fundamentally changed.

Clearly, Vancouver heritage policy and bylaws are designed to shelter designated buildings. Once a building becomes designated, legal restrictions are placed on the property title to protect the building from inappropriate alterations or demolition (City of Vancouver, *Heritage Fact Sheet 3*). However because of such limitations, it is often challenging to have property owners consent to designation. The Library building was listed on the Recent Landmarks inventory but was not designated. To secure the *voluntary* designation of this important building, City planners *had* to offer incentives. They also had to negotiate modifications to the appearance and inner arrangement of the building to help ensure an economically viable new function for the Library.

Many of these modifications, like removing the mosaic mural and obstructing the extensive glazing, disturbed the building's proponents. For example, architectural critic Robin Ward declared that "...demolition would be a more noble fate for the building than the Councilors' compromise" (*Vancouver Sun* February 18, 1995). However architect James Cheng rebutted such criticism with comments such as:

"I can understand those who want to preserve everything as it is. Certainly the more you can save, the better. But my concern as an architect is to have a building that is alive and that is part of the city. We're not building a museum for people to look at" (*Vancouver Sun* April 8, 1995).



In the end, though the Library building was stripped to its concrete shell and largely reconstructed, it was done in the essence of the original. The appearance of the exterior cladding is akin to the original; the granite base is partly intact; and the building has been refitted with its original exterior art. As well, an important urban design consideration has been resolved in that the rehabilitation of the Library preserved a valuable view of the Hotel Vancouver.

#### **4.3 Analysis**

The rehabilitation of both the B.C. Hydro and Library buildings show that planners were able to strike a balance between sacred space and marketplace. In both cases timing became crucial. The fact that the Recent Landmarks inventory was in development and could be invoked in both cases was unquestionably essential. And the case of the Library illustrates the importance of public dialogue: this building was jeopardized for a significant amount of time before coming to full public attention and receiving the benefit of advocacy. Finally, the importance of the incentives that make up Vancouver's Heritage Management Plan must be underlined, as neither of these projects could have proceeded without the financial benefits of density bonuses and bylaw relaxations.

The City's policy of "compromise" that allows negotiated incentives, relaxations, and modifications in return for rehabilitation and designation has resulted in the realization of a number of projects that would not otherwise have been economically feasible. While there is lingering concern that Vancouver's

voluntary, incentive-based heritage policy remains weak, and that the structural and stylistic interventions allowed in return for designation are too drastic, this policy of "compromise" has secured immeasurable cultural gain for Vancouver.

#### **4.4 Chapter Summary**

In return for a significant density bonus and a number of minor bylaw relaxations, the former B.C. Hydro office building was legally designated a heritage building in 1993. This landmark Modernist building was subsequently revitalized for residential use. This project can be considered extremely successful based on a number of measures, including: the saleability of the condominiums; the sensitivity of the rehabilitation process; and the positive feedback that the project received from the public.

Following a lengthy struggle to save the former Main Branch of the Vancouver Public Library, this local Modern monument was designated a heritage building in 1994. Due to the significant modifications made to the Library and the nature of its new role housing retail franchises, this revitalization project incited more debate than the B.C. Hydro rehabilitation. However, it too can be considered successful, as the spirit of the original building has been preserved; the new "Robson Central" project has been leased successfully; and Vancouverites (if not architectural critics) appear to accept the Library's latest incarnation.

To varying degrees, both case studies illustrate the successful application of Vancouver's heritage policy to post-war buildings. In essence, the recognition

that these two Modern buildings had been granted under the Recent Landmarks program of identification and documentation allowed City planners the advantage of being able to negotiate for their conservation with incentives.

## **Chapter 5 – Conclusions**

“I’m not asking for everything to be preserved, but now’s the time to do some careful counting. [Modernism] is a historical period worth having some tangible connection to” (Rhodri Windsor-Liscombe 1997)

### **5.0 Conclusions**

#### ***5.0.1 Introduction***

Vancouver is a city that contains a wealth of resources from the Modern era of architecture. Many of these buildings have been deemed to be of both local and national significance because of their historical, social, and stylistic importance. However, not all of the city’s twentieth-century structures and sites are worthy of conservation. The Recent Landmarks inventory developed by Vancouver heritage planners attempts to address this architectural resource and recognize the most notable buildings of the post-war period in the city.

The research pursued in this thesis aimed primarily to: 1) update the review of heritage planning policies and programs related to post-war architecture in other cities that preceded the establishment of Vancouver’s Recent Landmarks inventory, and 2) explore the relative success of the Recent Landmarks initiative since its inception almost 10 years ago. The secondary purpose of this thesis was to add, through this line of study, to the existing body of work on Modernism and Vancouver.

### **5.0.2 Assessing Recent Landmarks**

Before discussing the results of the heritage program survey and how other cities' programs relate to Vancouver's Recent Landmarks program, an informal assessment of the Recent Landmarks program must be performed. One way in which to do this is to use the "interrelated aspects [or "processes"] of heritage programs" established by architectural historians Susan Bronson and Thomas Jester in their paper "Conserving the Built Heritage of the Modern Era: Recent Developments and Ongoing Challenges". As such, the following paragraphs examine Vancouver's capabilities in the domains of: Identification and Inventory (combined for the purposes of this analysis), Listing, Protection, Research, and Awareness.

- **IDENTIFICATION AND INVENTORY**

In Vancouver, a set of evaluative and comparative criteria was developed approximately ten years ago to specifically address the city's Modern buildings and sites. Key measures included: age (minimum of 20 years old) and architectural importance, as well as the social/historical importance of a given building or its architect. Using this framework, "important themes were recognized and representative architectural examples were identified" (Ibid.:6). Furthermore, the Recent Landmarks study used these criteria to identify well over 100 buildings and sites that merited attention. Thus it can be argued that planners in Vancouver quickly and adeptly rose to the challenge of identifying and documenting the city's Modern assets.

- LISTING

The Recent Landmarks study specifically culled 100 buildings of landmark significance from the larger pool of noteworthy Modern buildings originally documented, and added these to the Vancouver Heritage Register. Although this group of 100 Recent Landmark buildings represents only approximately 5% of the 2200 buildings on the Heritage Register, the importance of the Modern period to Vancouver has been duly recognized.

- PROTECTION

Of the 100 Modern buildings on the Vancouver Heritage Register, three have received legal heritage designation. However, while heritage designation implies a high level of protection, it is not an absolute defense against demolition. Moreover, the nature of performing heritage designations in Vancouver has been deemed problematic. While City heritage designation policy allows for involuntary designations, in practice this does not occur as City Council is wary of the financial compensation that would have to be given in such cases. Thus planners are forced to wait until redevelopment opportunities arise, and then try to negotiate designation in return for non-monetary incentives. Thus for the two aforementioned reasons, it appears that heritage designation in Vancouver (whether for older or more recent architecture) could benefit from a more assertive approach and a more secure form of protection.

- RESEARCH

The Heritage Planning Department at the City of Vancouver has performed considerable research exploring the different aspects of Vancouver's post-war architecture, from the wide-ranging social significance of this style to the particular challenges encountered in fostering its appreciation. In terms of documentation, the City possesses thorough files containing primary source and secondary source information, books, and articles.

Furthermore, the Recent Landmarks program benefits from the professional and educational associations that City staff maintain. Current and former members of Vancouver's heritage planning staff are involved with DOCOMOMO, the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada, and ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), thus information is informally exchanged between these pedagogical organizations and the bureaucracy of the City.

- AWARENESS

A detailed brochure on the Recent Landmarks program and a case study recounting the successful heritage revitalization of a Modern building case study (and thus explaining the use of City policy and heritage conservation tools) have been prepared and distributed to educate the public on both the program and Vancouver's Modern legacy. Moreover, in the early 1990's one of the annual City heritage award ceremonies was focused on Modern architecture. Finally, the local print media have been successfully enlisted to help disseminate

information on Modernism in Vancouver, particularly in early 1998 during the "New Spirit" exhibit and in 1995 and 1996 when the Library was threatened.

### ***5.0.3 Programs that Address the Recent Past - Vancouver vs. Other North American Cities***

Before the Recent Landmarks program was developed in Vancouver, a review was undertaken by City planners to examine what other jurisdictions had done in response to threatened stocks of Modern architecture. This review showed that little had been done in this domain in North America. In 1997, a Parks Canada survey revealed "a growing number of municipal inventories of the heritage of the recent past [in Canada]..." (Bronson, 1997:7). On this topic, Bronson and Jester wrote that "the City of Vancouver's Recent Landmarks Program... inspired similar inventories in surrounding municipalities, and programs are being carried out in other cities across the country..." (1997:7).

The results of this thesis questionnaire show that by 1999, all but one of the six surveyed North American municipalities had addressed the issue of Modern heritage. However none of the consulted cities had developed distinct programs to address this resource. For example, while several cities reported listing Modern buildings on their heritage inventories, none of the municipalities canvassed reported the development of studies or inventories that were focused on post-war landmarks.

It should be noted that several of the responses to the questionnaire were quite brief, leaving the remote possibility that a certain specialized program does exist and was not reported. Ultimately, however, the scope of this thesis was to



assess the information provided in the responses to the questionnaire. Thus from this information, it appears that the Recent Landmarks initiative in Vancouver remains quite exceptional. As detailed in section 5.0.2 of this chapter, the Recent Landmarks initiative has identified several (and spurred the designation of some) significant Modern buildings, stimulated the creation of reports and studies, and made strong attempts to engage the public. In sum, the results gleaned from this thesis survey show that the Recent Landmarks initiative remains a leader in the specialized realm of heritage conservation for Modern architecture, and that many North American cities have yet to match Vancouver's efforts.

Importantly, this conclusion - that several cities in North America have not yet adequately addressed the conservation of Modern architecture - supports prior assertions made by planners and heritage conservationists. Several commentators in these fields have noted that, for a number of reasons, many cities and countries are having difficulty addressing the realm of issues surrounding Modern heritage. Bronson and Jester capture this issue well when they state:

"Although the conservation community has attained a level of competence over the last 30 years in the development of philosophically and technically appropriate solutions for conserving earlier built heritage, it has yet to come to terms with some of the challenges presented by the resources of the recent past...North America is rich in [such] resources, but what should be safeguarded, and how, is far from obvious. A significant portion of the population - including some heritage professionals and policy makers, as well as the general public - is not yet convinced that this heritage is worthy of protection. Furthermore, many government agencies, with downsized staff and diminished budgets, are struggling to protect earlier heritage and have been

unable to develop programs focusing on more recent resources” (1997:4).

It remains to be seen whether the North American public, heritage planners, and conservation professionals will work to overcome the obstacles that prevent Modern resources from being widely appreciated and effectively commemorated.

#### **5.0.4 Broader Heritage Programs – Vancouver vs. Other North American Cities**

While the Recent Landmarks program appears to be uniquely evolved, the City of Vancouver’s larger Heritage Conservation Program appears, in many ways, to resemble other North American cities’ conservation programs. As is the case in Vancouver, all of the jurisdictions consulted reported that heritage conservation was governed under civic authority, administrated by municipal staff, and advised upon by local landmark commissions. All of the cities also noted that both incentives and protective measure were utilized to protect heritage buildings and sites. Moreover, all municipalities reported a satisfactory level of public support and varying degrees of political support for heritage programs.

However, differences arose amongst the surveyed cities in terms of the nature of heritage designation and the use of incentives. It seems that some cities possess a more aggressive system of designation and protection than Vancouver. For example, in New York, landmark buildings can be designated without the voluntary consent of the owner. As well, some cities – such as

Victoria - employ more comprehensive incentive strategies that include monetary grants and tax exemptions to assist with the costs of heritage revitalization.

Vancouver has yet to embrace such forms of encouragement for heritage conservation.

### **5.1 Recommendations**

Several recommendations arise out the conclusions of this thesis research. First, Vancouver planners should be commended for their progressive work on Recent Landmarks, and this program should continue to receive support. Council must be careful to avoid the inaccurate conclusion that (because of the achievements of this program) the protection of Vancouver's worthy Modern buildings is now "fait accompli".

Second, the nature of heritage designation in Vancouver should be re-examined. Because of its highly voluntary nature and its reliance on non-monetary incentives, the Heritage Conservation Program in Vancouver would likely benefit from a closer review of protective tools from heritage programs in other jurisdictions. While the existing Heritage Conservation Program has secured the retention of several landmark buildings and sites, moving toward City-initiated designation may prove to be more effective. If the mandate does not exist to make such an extreme shift, planners in Vancouver may want to propose to Council that the City's existing incentive-based program be augmented with more direct forms of compensation. Possibilities to be explored could include grants, tax credits and limited exemptions, and credits against

development fees. In this vein, Victoria's granting program could potentially be a model for Vancouver to investigate given the relative similarities in governmental and funding contexts. Of course, there is a web of issues beyond the scope of this thesis that would have to be resolved before such initiatives could be implemented. Future studies in this domain will determine whether or not there are viable methods of establishing more protective conservation measures and funding more direct forms of compensation in Vancouver. And time will determine whether or not there is sufficient political support to initiate such changes.

Further research on this subject could also examine whether or not a regional government could be more effective in managing heritage resources. Perhaps the case of the recent greater Toronto amalgamation could serve as a working laboratory. Heritage issues in the new Toronto mega-city could be explored in a few years time and an assessment could be made on whether this change in local government has brought about a more effective approach to heritage conservation.

A final idea for future research is to investigate constructive solutions from other areas that address the lack of governmental staff resources (at all levels) to address heritage issues. More study is necessary on potential means to effectively cope with the challenge of dwindling financial and staffing resources.

## **5.2 Final Comments: The Issue of Political and Public Responsibility**

The responsibility for heritage conservation in Vancouver officially resides with the municipal government. And in this city, where land values and development pressures are extraordinarily high, the political resolution to preserve (older *or* newer) heritage buildings can often be weakened. While Vancouver's City Council has affirmed the cultural values underlying conservation - that is, the idea that preserving the past provides an important means for appreciating the present - in practice, this stated affirmation has often been superceded by other forces.

In order to reinforce City policy and programs, and thus form a vital system of commemorating and protecting the recent past, a strong commitment to heritage conservation is needed from local politicians. Yet, in a most abstract sense, the responsibility for heritage conservation lies not with City Council, planners, or heritage advocates. Rather, by advising their civic government accordingly, it is the general public in Vancouver who will determine what is to be valued in the city. And whether that placement of value shifts, allowing the older fabric of the city to become more broadly prized, or whether the premium remains on constructing a largely new "world-class city", it is the populace of Vancouver that will be ultimately accountable.

## **5.3 Chapter Summary**

The findings of this thesis show that of the North American cities polled, the Recent Landmarks program in Vancouver remains the most well-developed

framework for commemorating the recent past. While most of the other cities surveyed had listed and designated post-war structures, none had created specific programs to document or conserve Modern buildings, or educate the public. Evaluated on five measures, the Recent Landmarks program fared well. The only potential weaknesses in this initiative (in actuality, Vancouver's broader Heritage Conservation Program) appear to be in the areas of involuntary designation and financial incentives. In these areas, Vancouver could potentially learn from the work being done in other cities. In doing so, the City's conservation program would be strengthened.

## Bibliography

- Bernstein, William; Cawker, Ruth (Eds.). Building With Words: Canadian Architects on Architecture. Toronto: Coach House Press. 1981.
- Boddy, Trevor. Modern Architecture in Alberta. Alberta Culture/Canadian Plains Research Centre. 1987.
- Boddy, Trevor. The Globe and Mail. Various.
- Bristol, Katharine. "The Pruitt-Igoe Myth". Journal of Architectural Education. Volume 44, Number 3. May 1991. p. 163-170
- Bronson, Susan. Built Heritage of the Modern Era. Ottawa: Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. 1997.
- Bronson, Susan; Jester, Thomas. "Conserving the Built Heritage of the Modern Era: Recent Developments and Ongoing Challenges". APT Bulletin. Volume 28, Number 4. 1997. p. 4-12.
- Bronson, Susan; Jester, Thomas, guest eds. Mending the Modern. APT Bulletin. Volume 28, Number 4. 1997.
- Burman, Peter, Garner, Keith; Schmidt, Leo, eds.. The Conservation of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Historic Buildings. York, England: The Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, The University of York. 1996.
- Canada Council. Massey Medals for Architecture Exhibition Catalogue. Various.
- Canadian Centre for Architecture. The New Spirit. Modern Architecture in Vancouver. Exhibition Pamphlet.
- Canadian Homes and Gardens 1955-1965.
- Charles H. Scott Gallery. Vancouver School of Art: The Growth Years, 1939 – 1965. (Accompanying Book to Exhibition). Vancouver: Emily Carr College of Art and Design. 1983.
- Cheng, James. Vancouver Sun. April 8, 1995.
- Collier, Allan. "The Trend House Program". Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada (SSAC) Bulletin. Volume 20, Number 2. June 1995. p. 51-55.
- Cramp, Beverly. "Super, Natural Architecture". Vancouver Courier. November 5, 1997. p. 1-5.
- Cross, Alexander. "Creating Domestic Space in 1950's Canada". Architecture and Ideas. Issue Number 1, Fall/Winter 1995. p. 90-99.
- Crossman, Kelly. "Vancouver Architecture in 1960: The Case of Ron Thom". SSAC Bulletin. Volume 22, Number 1. March 1997. p. 19-25.
- Crossman, Kelly. "Humphrey Carver: Looking Back". Architecture and Ideas. Issue Number 1, Fall/Winter 1996. p. 30-39.
- Curtis, William J.R. Modern Architecture Since 1900. London: Phaidon. Revised Edition. 1996.
- Davis, Chuck. The Greater Vancouver Book - An Urban Encyclopaedia. Vancouver: Linkman Press. 1997.
- Denhez, Marc. Heritage Fights Back: Legal, Financial, and Promotional Aspects of Canada's Efforts to Save its Architecture and Historic Sites. Ottawa: Heritage Canada. 1978.

- Ede, Carol Moore. Canadian Architecture 1960 - 1970. Toronto: Burns and MacEachern Ltd. 1971.
- Fenton, Barry; Fung, Annette; Pow, Douglas. Heritage Preservation in Vancouver. Vancouver: University of British Columbia. 1977.
- Frampton, Kenneth. Modern Architecture: A Critical History. London: Thames and Hudson. Revised Edition 1992.
- Freedman, Adele. Sight Lines: Looking at Architecture and Design in Canada. Toronto: Oxford University Press. 1990.
- Freedman, Adele. The Globe and Mail. Various.
- Friedman, Alice T. Women and the Making of the Modern House: A Social and Architectural History. New York: Abrams. 1998.
- Ghirardo, Diane. Architecture After Modernism. New York: Thames and Hudson. 1996.
- Gordon, Alastair. "Utopia Isn't What it Used to Be – The Challenge of Preserving Early Modernist Homes". Architectural Record. April 1997. p. 26-32.
- Gowans, Alan. Building Canada: An Architectural History of Canadian Life. Toronto: Oxford University Press. 1966.
- Gruft, Andrew. "Vancouver Architecture, The Last Fifteen Years". Vancouver: Art and Artists, 1931 - 1983. Vancouver Art Gallery. 1983.
- Heritage Society of British Columbia. "HRA's – Potholes in the Road to Heritage Heaven". HSBC Newsletter. Winter 1889/1999. p. 6-8.
- Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (JRAIC). May 1956. October 1956. April 1958. December 1958. April 1959. January 1962. April 1962.
- Kalman, Harold. A History of Canadian Architecture (Volume 2). Toronto: Oxford University Press. 1994.
- Kluckner, Michael. Paving Paradise: Is BC Losing its Heritage? Vancouver: Whitecap Books. 1991.
- Leckie, Ruth. A Guide to Researching Historic Buildings in Vancouver. City of Vancouver Archives. 1982.
- Lemon, Robert G. "New Buildings, Old Values – Vancouver's Recent Landmarks". Heritage. Volume 1, Number 2. Summer 1998. p. 10-13.
- Lemon, Robert G.; D'Agostini, Marco. "Recent Landmarks in Vancouver: The Post-1940's Inventory". CRM. Volume 16, Number 6. 1993.
- Luxton, Donald. The Modern Architecture of North Vancouver: 1930-1965. District of North Vancouver. 1998.
- Livesey, Graham; McMordie, Michael; Simmins, Geoffrey. Twelve Modern Houses, 1945 - 1985. Calgary: Aris Press: University of Calgary. 1995.
- MacDonald, Bruce. Vancouver: A Visual History. Vancouver: Talon Books. 1992.
- Macdonald, Susan, ed. Modern Matters: Principles and Practice in Conserving Recent Architecture. Washington, D.C.: Historic Preservation Education Foundation. 1995.
- McKay, Sherry. "Western Living, Western Homes". SSAC Bulletin. Volume 14,



- Number 3. September 1989. p. 65-74.
- McKenzie, Sandra. "Closing the Book: The Fight To Save (Or Tear Down) The Vancouver Library". Vancouver Step. June/July 1993.
- McLennan, Ian. The Architecture of Urban and Suburban Development. Canadian Housing Design Council. 1964.
- Merrick, Paul. Personal Interview. Spring 1998.
- Murray, J.A. "Quo Vadis". JRAIC. February 1959. p.38-41.
- Nuttgens, Patrick. Understanding Modern Architecture. London: Unwin Hyman. 1988.
- Oberlander, Judy; Kalman, Harold; Lemon, Robert. Principles of Heritage Conservation. Victoria: British Columbia Heritage Trust. 1989.
- Parkin, John C. "The Architect - Client Relationship from the Point of View of the Architect" Keynote Address: Saskatchewan Symposium on Architecture 1961. Saskatchewan Arts Board. 1962.
- Pevsner, Nikolaus. The Sources of Modern Architecture and Design. New York: Thames and Hudson. 1968.
- Pevsner, Nikolaus. Pioneers of Modern Design. New York: Penguin Books. Revised Edition 1960.
- Price, Gordon. Vancouver Courier. February 19, 1992.
- Province of British Columbia, Heritage Branch. Heritage Conservation: A Community Guide. 1995.
- Rossiter, Sean. "Building Boomers". Western Living. August 1988. p. 21-37.
- Roy, Patricia. Vancouver, An Illustrated History. Toronto: James Lorimer and Company and the National Museum of Man. 1980.
- Shadbolt, Douglas. Ron Thom: The Shaping of an Architect. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre. 1995.
- Shadbolt, Douglas. "Postwar Architecture in Vancouver". Vancouver: Art and Artists, 1931 - 1983. Vancouver Art Gallery. 1983.
- Sharp, Dennis. Twentieth Century Architecture: A Visual History. New York: Facts on File. 1991.
- Shiffer, Rebecca A., guest ed. Cultural Resources From the Recent Past. CRM. Volume 16, Number 6. 1993.
- Shiffer, Rebecca A.; Park, Sharon C., guest eds. Preserving the Recent Past. CRM. Volume 18, Number 8. 1995
- Stratton, Michael. Structure and Style: Conserving 20<sup>th</sup> Century Buildings. New York: E and FN Spon. 1997.
- Simmins, Geoffrey (Ed.). Documents in Canadian Architecture. Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press. 1992.
- Stelter, Gilbert A.; Artibise, Alan F.J. The Canadian City: Essays in Urban and Social History. Ottawa: Carleton University Press. 1984.
- The Canadian Architect. November 1955. January 1956. March 1957. April 1957. June 1957. October 1959.
- Uzzell, David L. Heritage Interpretation. New York: Belhaven Press. 1989.
- Ward, Robin. Robin Ward's Heritage West Coast. Madiera Park, BC: Harbour Publishing. 1993.
- Ward, Robin. "Modernism Matters". Georgia Strait. November 6-13, 1997.

- Ward, Robin. Vancouver Sun. Various.  
Western Homes and Living 1955-1965.
- Whiteson, Leon. Modern Canadian Architecture. Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers Ltd. 1983.
- Windsor-Liscombe, Rhodri. The New Spirit. Modern Architecture in Vancouver 1938-1963. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre. 1997.
- Windsor-Liscombe, Rhodri. New Spirit Symposium. Vancouver Art Gallery. November 9, 1997.
- Windsor-Liscombe, Rhodri. "Modes of Modernizing: The Acquisition of Modernist Design in Canada". SSAC Bulletin. Volume 19, Number 3. p. 60-74.
- Windsor-Liscombe, Rhodri. "Leonard Marsh and the Vancouver Modern". Architecture and Ideas. Issue Number 1, Fall/Winter 1996. p. 40-51.
- Wynn, Graeme; Oke, Timothy (Eds.). Vancouver and Its Region. Vancouver: UBC Press. 1992.

## City of Vancouver – Documents Cited

Administration Report. October 1, 1992.  
Administration Report. December 1, 1994.  
Administration Report. June 14, 1995.  
Case Studies in Heritage Revitalization (*The Electra*). 1998.  
Heritage Bylaw. December 1974.  
Heritage Fact Sheets 1 - 9. February 1997.  
Heritage Policies and Guidelines. March 1995.  
Heritage Resource Inventory Form – 970 Burrard Street.  
Heritage Resource Inventory Form – 750 Burrard Street.  
Notes From Vancouver Heritage Commission. December 4, 1995.  
Policy Report – Development and Building. August 24, 1993.  
Transfer of Density Policy and Procedure. July 1997.  
Recent Landmarks Pamphlet. 1992.  
Memorandum. August 10, 1993.  
Memorandum. June 23, 1995.

## Appendix 1 – List of Professionals Cited

Former Senior Heritage Planner, City of Vancouver  
Coordinator, DOCOMOMO Ontario  
Senior Heritage Preservationist, Heritage Toronto  
President, DOCOMOMO US  
Senior Heritage Planner, City of Victoria  
Senior Officer, Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles  
Former Historic Preservation Officer, City of Phoenix  
Vice-Chairman, DOCOMOMO Germany

-Robert Lemon  
-Ian Panabaker  
-Richard Stromberg  
-Theodore Prudon  
-Steve Barber  
-Jay Oren  
-Debbie Abele  
-Berthold Burkhardt

## Appendix 2 – Questionnaire Form

1. Does the City of X recognize and include significant Modern architecture in its definition of “heritage” or “landmark”?
2. If so, what criteria are used to determine the heritage value of X’s “recent landmarks”?  
*(For example, in Vancouver age is a key criterion. Structures that are more than 20 years old may be considered for “Recent Landmark” status)*
3. Where does jurisdiction or authority fall for this issue? Is it a local, regional, or national issue in terms of policy?  
*(For example, in Vancouver it is primarily a local issue. The civic government, upon recommendation from City planners, creates bylaws and policy to address heritage issues)*
4. What policies, initiatives, or guidelines specifically address Modern heritage?  
*(Please elaborate)*
5. Or does Modern architecture fall under any general heritage conservation policies – i.e. those policies that pertain to all significant structures?
6. Is City X’s heritage policy (whether specific to twentieth century landmarks or aimed generally at all styles of architecture) based on:
  - A. *planning and development incentives* given in return for legal heritage designation and protection – like zoning or building bylaw relaxations, parking requirement relaxations, permit fast-tracking, density bonuses, and/or tax breaks, or on
  - B. *protective or prohibitive measures* – like involuntary heritage designation, heritage revitalization agreements or covenants, heritage alteration permits, inspections, impact assessments, withholding approvals and permits, and/or heritage site maintenance standards.
7. Have these policies/regulations been successfully applied? Are they viable? Do they garner political endorsement? Does the public support them?
8. Could you provide me with one or two examples of situations in which these policies or initiatives were exercised?  
*(For example, has a noted Modern building been protected from demolition or adaptively re-used?)*
9. Do you have any comments you would like to add?

## **Appendix 3 – Questionnaire Responses**

### **A. Introduction**

For the survey component of this thesis, the method employed was to contact, and then send questionnaires to representatives from civic planning or cultural/landmark departments, and to representatives of local chapters of DOCOMOMO. The questionnaire was sent to representatives in the following cities: Toronto, Montreal, Victoria, Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, and Phoenix. Replies were received from all cities except Montreal and Chicago. As well, a representative of DOCOMOMO Germany was contacted in the hope that some comparisons could thus be made with information drawn from both North American and European conservation policy contexts. For a thorough explanation of the logic behind the selection process for surveyed cities, see Chapter 1, section 1.4.2 of this thesis.

To help organize the responses, the questionnaire has been largely reproduced in each following sections. Also for the sake of legibility and organization, many responses have been paraphrased and/or augmented with information sent by the respondent or from the respective city's website.

### **B. Results of Survey**

#### ***B.1 Toronto***

The senior preservationist at Heritage Toronto, the City of Toronto's heritage agency; and the Coordinator of DOCOMOMO Ontario participated in

this thesis questionnaire. Together, their responses form the following paragraphs.

**1. Does the City of Toronto include significant Modern architecture in its definition of heritage?**

Yes, officially the City of Toronto recognizes the significance of post-war buildings. However, it should be noted that both respondents highlighted that there is very limited political support for heritage conservation in Toronto.

The City has listed and designated Modern buildings on its registry, and to differing degrees, so do the surrounding cities (which are now officially all part of the amalgamated Toronto). North York, for example, lists and designates Modern buildings. Yet out of 5000 listed buildings on the City registry, only approximately 60 are post-war structures and there are significant omissions from the list. For example, the 1968 Toronto Dominion Towers, designed by Mies Van der Rohe and local luminary John Parkin, have not been listed or designated.

**2. What criteria are used to determine the heritage value of Toronto's Modernist structures?**

The same set of criteria for inclusion on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties is applied to any property, regardless of type or age. Thus Modern buildings must meet the same standards as more aged heritage structures. These criteria take into consideration the architecture, history, and context of the site and its structures. The DOCOMOMO Coordinator noted that in practice it has been difficult to establish the legitimacy of some post-war

buildings in attempts to initiate commemoration. He stated, "Little documentation or scholarly research is available to convince skeptics of the significance of faded Modern buildings – and there appear to be so many of them and [many are] of dubious quality".

As well, Toronto has a written policy in place regarding the minimum age for potential heritage buildings that limits the consideration of any buildings less than ten years old. However, in practice, buildings that are less than approximately twenty-five years old are rarely evaluated. Nevertheless, Revell's landmark City Hall was designated in 1978 when it was fifteen years old and Roy Thomson Hall was also designated when it was as young.

**3. Where does jurisdiction or authority fall for this issue? Is it a local, regional, or national issue in terms of policy?**

In Toronto, jurisdiction for city heritage buildings falls at the local level, as the Ontario Heritage Act delegates this responsibility to municipalities in Ontario. The Act allows for local heritage advisory authorities called Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committees (LACACs). These committees make recommendations to City Councils regarding heritage issues and staff perform heritage planning functions. In Toronto, the LACAC was formerly known as the Toronto Historical Board. Now, after amalgamation of the outlying cities who each had their own LACACs, the agency has been re-christened Heritage Toronto. In addition to Heritage Toronto, Toronto has its own municipal procedures, and zoning and other planning matters are municipal responsibilities.



The heritage regime in Ontario is likely to remain a local issue as the Province only intervenes in the sites locally registered or where they hold an easement. And the Federal Government only operates on sites of national importance, as determined by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. According to The DOCOMOMO Coordinator, no post-war building or site in the Toronto area has yet merited national attention.

**4. What policies, initiatives, or guidelines specifically address Modern heritage?**

In Toronto, there is nothing formal. However, Council has identified and listed or designated 60 buildings built since World War II. Unfortunately, two of these designated buildings – the 1954 Anglo Canada Insurance and the 1959 Union Carbide buildings – have since been demolished, thus lessening the implicit assurances of heritage protection.

**5. Does Modern architecture fall under any general heritage conservation policies – i.e. those policies that pertain to all significant structures?**

As already noted, yes. Any of the buildings that are listed or designated by the LACAC are protected under the Ontario Heritage Act, regardless of age or style. And as responsibility lies at the local level, municipal planning and zoning regulations apply to any and all designated buildings.

**6. Is Toronto's heritage policy (whether specific to Modern architecture or aimed generally at all styles of architecture) based on:**

- A. Planning and development incentives given in return for legal heritage designation and protection or on**
- B. protective or prohibitive measures?**

According to Heritage Toronto, "Ontario relies heavily on sticks rather than carrots, so 'B' is the basic answer". DOCOMOMO corroborated this statement.

Toronto does not permit tax breaks, but did use parking exemptions, density transfers and bonuses, and other bonuses in the 1980's. However, in the last decade planning philosophy has shifted in this city, as has the economic situation. One example of this shift lies in the move from density to simpler "envelope" zoning, which essentially means that as long as a project fits within the envelope defined by setbacks, heights, and in some cases, angular planes, it is approved (assuming the building code is met). As well, the Heritage Toronto preservationist mentioned three heritage conservation cases that were in negotiation (none involving Modern buildings) in which developers were not interested in excess density in return for saving the building, as they felt that they could not rent the extra space. Thus, he argued that Toronto planners need to find new tools for heritage conservation that will fit the current political and economic climate in that city.

**7. Have these policies regulations been successfully applied? Are they viable? Do they garner political support? Does the public support them?**

In terms of applying policy successfully, the DOCOMOMO Coordinator felt that the jury was still out. Important Modern buildings in Toronto have been designated, thus indicating some success. However, some of these same buildings have been lost despite their designated importance. DOCOMOMO Ontario was formed in response to a 1987 exhibit on the Toronto Modern era, with the goal of lobbying for the designation of some of the key buildings

highlighted in that show. When these buildings were lost, the group became “emotionally burnt-out”. This group points to the Ontario Heritage Act as a primary hindrance to conservation efforts – apparently it does not provide for adequate protection.

Regarding viability, the Coordinator of DOCOMOMO Ontario wrote,

“The history of post-war Canadian architecture is essentially commercial in nature – viability is judged a great deal on commercial grounds. If a project makes sense commercially, then a designated Modern building may be reused. Unfortunately, what was commercially viable 30 years ago is usually very unpopular today”.

Speaking to political and public support, he acknowledged that politicians respond to public pressure and on the whole in Toronto, the public does not appear to value most Modern buildings. He recalled that there were several debates between DOCOMOMO and other lobbyist groups, and found that the politicians pragmatically sided with whomever had a larger constituency.

The senior Heritage Toronto preservationist summed up the political context by stating that “[b]etween [Premier] Mike Harris and [Mayor] Mel Lastman, the Philistines are winning”. In terms of public support, he noted that “Modern architecture...suffers from the hindrances to which we are accustomed. And it requires education”.

**8. Could you provide me with one or two examples of situations in which these policies or initiatives were exercised?**

Protected From Demolition:

- Toronto City Hall (Revell, 1963)  
During amalgamation, debates rose about abandoning this building. With public pressure, it was instead sensitively upgraded and renovated.

- Sun Life Headquarters (Parkin, 1960)

This building was renovated and the systems were upgraded in the early 1990's for Zurich Insurance. Many believe that the "enlightened" European client propelled this project.

#### Adaptively Reused:

- Some commercial buildings from the 1960's have been converted into condominiums, but most often the only remnant from the original building has been the frame. Only one of these projects kept significant portions of the façade intact.

#### Listed/Designated But Demolished:

- 76 St. Clair West (James Murray, 1957)

This small, "jazzy" office building was demolished for a larger condo tower. An "unviable size" argument was used successfully against the building to argue for its demolition.

- Union Carbide Building (Shore and Moffat, 1958)

This large, expensive headquarters building was demolished for a more dense condominium project. The case for demolition was aided by the fact that there was asbestos in the building and that there were apparent site constraints. The Union Carbide Building was *almost* saved when the City of Toronto passed a bylaw permitting owners of office buildings to convert to residential "as of right", meaning that they did not have to go through an Official Plan Amendment or rezoning process. But the City had permitted land severance, which separated parking from the building. Thus no parking could be inserted under the building's footings, making condo conversion impossible.

#### 9. Do you have any comments you would like to add?

Heritage Toronto's preservationist noted that several non-listed buildings have been converted to residential because of the bylaw permitting owners of office buildings to convert "as of right". However more widespread use is limited by the desire to have opening windows and balconies where they did not exist before. Other problems with the adaptive re-use of Modern buildings involve the materials. He asserted:

"Original materials are not holding up, and new materials don't fit, physically and stylistically. Curtain-walls and mechanicals need to be replaced [and] modern HVAC systems, cabling for telecommunications, and current expectations about space and light don't conform with 30-40 year-old systems/expectations".

DOCOMOMO's Coordinator noted that one of the effects of the recent amalgamation was an attempt to more closely link planning departments and heritage organizations. If successful, this would prevent "the stand-off heritage board from learning about things too late...and [the problem of] the stand-offish heritage board [inciting] confrontational positions during development discussions". One idea currently being discussed is creating a distinct City "heritage planner" position.

## ***B.2 Victoria***

The Senior Heritage Planner at the City of Victoria, replied to the questionnaire and provided a series of City policies, plans, and articles. However, because the City of Victoria does not recognize Modern architecture as heritage, much of this information was inapplicable in regard to this thesis research. The respondent's answers to the questionnaire are reflected in the following paragraphs, and information from the printed material he provided is incorporated wherever possible.

### **1. Does the City of Victoria include significant Modern architecture in its definition of heritage?**

No, there is very little in Victoria in the way of policy or initiatives directed at Modern architecture. There has been discussion about the need to review the

City's Inventory of Historic Resources to include landscape resources, interiors, and Modern architecture. However, the only way to expand the heritage program would be to expand staff resources. Thus, this planner voiced doubt that much would happen in this regard in the near future, barring a sudden groundswell of public opinion in favour of an expanded program.

**2. What criteria are used to determine the heritage value of Victoria's Modernist structures?**

Not applicable. Buildings of the recent past are not considered for heritage commemoration. The criteria used to judge *older* heritage properties include: architectural and environmental integrity; historic context; significance of previous owners, builders, or architects; and restoration and rehabilitation potential (City of Victoria Heritage Program "Building on Our Past").

**3. Where does jurisdiction or authority fall for this issue? Is it a local, regional, or national issue in terms of policy?**

Heritage conservation in Victoria is primarily a municipal issue. The local government is informed of heritage issues by the Victoria Heritage Advisory Committee. The Committee also monitors the Victoria Heritage Inventory, reviews relevant Development Permits, recommends buildings for designation, and plans educational programming.

**4. What policies, initiatives, or guidelines specifically address Modern heritage?**

None. But Victoria *does* have extensive programs and policies designed to protect the city's extensive collection of Victorian, Edwardian and Arts and

Crafts style architecture. The reality is that the City of Victoria has one full-time planner and one half-time secretary on staff devoted to heritage (due to Provincial government cutbacks, the City has lost three planning staff). With over 750 buildings on the current Inventory, the heritage planning staff are already wholly occupied dealing with related work .

**5. Does Modern architecture fall under any general heritage conservation policies – i.e. those policies that pertain to all significant structures?**

No.

**6. Is Victoria's heritage policy (whether specific to Modern architecture or aimed generally at all styles of architecture) based on:**

- A. Planning and development incentives given in return for legal heritage designation and protection or on**
- B. protective or prohibitive measures?**

The City of Victoria uses a variety of both incentives and regulatory techniques (prohibitive measures). Financial incentives include grants and tax incentives. For example, the City of Victoria funds the Downtown Heritage Building Incentive Program, which is administered by the Victoria Civic Heritage Trust. This program "provides financial assistance with façade restoration, structural improvements, upgrading required by building codes, and other rehabilitation costs" (Downtown Heritage Building Incentive Program Pamphlet). It is estimated that this program has encouraged \$5,410,000 in private investment in the restoration of these buildings (City of Victoria "Heritage Program: 40 Years of Advocacy and Conservation" 2).

Residential properties that have official heritage designation are eligible for City-funded grants under the House Grant Program, which is administered by the Victoria Heritage Foundation. These grants help cover costs for most types of rehabilitation work including: roofing, seismic upgrading, woodwork, the restoration of period details, and exterior painting. In the last two decades, the City has contributed over \$1.5 million to this program. Other City incentives include density bonuses and transfers.

Tax incentives for residential conversion became available in Victoria in 1998, when City Council "approved a new program to assist the owners of downtown heritage buildings to convert under-utilized or vacant upper story space to residential use" (City of Victoria Tax Incentive Program Document). Victoria thus became the first municipality in B.C. to take advantage of new Provincial heritage legislation (Barber "Tax Incentives..." 20). This program was developed to foster an increase in residential occupancy in the downtown area by offsetting seismic upgrade costs. Under this program, property tax exemptions may be allowed for up to ten years to compensate for upgrade expenses.

Regulatory techniques include: Official Community Plan regulations; special design guidelines and zoning bylaws for historic Old Town and Chinatown; legal heritage designation; regulation of alterations made to heritage buildings; and regulation of signage in heritage conservation areas.

**7. Have these policies regulations been successfully applied? Are they viable? Do they garner political support? Does the public support them?**



Yes, these policies have been very successful.

**8. Could you provide me with one or two examples of situations in which these policies or initiatives were exercised?**

The only structure that is close to Modern which has had its façade preserved is the Art Deco Sussex Hotel. In return for restoring and preserving the hotel's façade, the City allowed a density bonus in the form of a new commercial tower that was built adjacent to the hotel.

### **B.3 New York**

The President of DOCOMOMO U.S., participated in this thesis questionnaire. His responses form the following paragraphs, augmented by information, as noted, from the New York City Council website (<http://www.council.nyc.ny.us/newswire/landmark.htm>). The Landmark Preservation Officer in New York City was contacted numerous times, but offered no reply.

**1. Does New York City include significant Modern architecture in its definition of heritage?**

Yes, New York City does include Modern buildings on its Landmark listings of over 20,000 buildings.

**2. What criteria are used to determine the heritage value of New York's Modernist structures?**

The age of a building or site is an issue, but generally the "icons" of Modern architecture are protected without much trouble or opposition.

Essentially, the primary value for heritage buildings in New York City is placed on age, and "then a complex set of criteria" are applied to each case. These criteria may be influenced by the reality of the political climate, the relative importance of the occupant, or the importance of the original purpose of the building.

**3. Where does jurisdiction or authority fall for this issue? Is it a local, regional, or national issue in terms of policy?**

Heritage protection is a local issue that is undertaken by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. The only exception may be the use of Federal legislation, which remains highly honorary in nature (that is, provided that no tax credits are taken for a given restoration project). The Landmarks Preservation Commission has its own staff that work to survey, document, and recommend buildings and sites for landmark status. This body also subsequently monitors compliance and reviews alterations to the structures and façades of heritage buildings. The Commission is active in designation and other protective measures.

**4. What policies, initiatives, or guidelines specifically address Modern heritage?**

No specific policies address Modern architecture as an exception. In general, the approach in New York City is that the preservation of Modern architecture is just one more variant on the larger conservation theme.

DOCOMOMO US's President noted that "[p]ersonally, I believe that [approach] to be over-simplistic".

**5. Does Modern architecture fall under any general heritage conservation policies – i.e. those policies that pertain to all significant structures?**

The Landmarks Preservation and Historic Districts Law of the New York City Administrative Code, created in 1966, aims to protect all designated buildings regardless of age (website).

**6. Is New York's heritage policy (whether specific to Modern architecture or aimed generally at all styles of architecture) based on:**

- A. Planning and development incentives given in return for legal heritage designation and protection or on**
- B. protective or prohibitive measures?**

Heritage policy in New York City is driven by several types of initiatives and policy. The current situation regarding incentives is that several have been proposed and discussed for possible use but few remain available. One incentive that is used fairly commonly is the transfer of air rights (i.e. "building volume that could be developed if the building were to be demolished"). The criteria applied to do such transfers are somewhat more lenient for landmark structures than would be the case for other development projects.

In terms of protective measures, designation, for example, is a common tool. Designation requires that all subsequent alteration work be reviewed and approved by the Landmarks Preservation Commission. Depending on the amount of intervention, alterations to a landmark can be done via a "Certificate of No Effect", a "Certificate of Minor Work", or a "Certificate of Appropriateness". Thus there are varying levels of requirement. Enforcement is enacted by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, through the Department of Buildings. No building permit is issued without first being approved by the Commission. This is

strictly enforced and permit violations are often issued. "Maintenance standards are also now beginning to be rigorously enforced, with the help of a new set of penalties introduced in 1997 that allows civil and criminal fines to be levied of between \$500 and \$10,000 USD for cases of neglected or altered landmark buildings" (website).

**7. Have these policies regulations been successfully applied? Are they viable? Do they garner political support? Does the public support them?**

**8. Could you provide me with one or two examples of situations in which these policies or initiatives were exercised?**

Recent Landmark Designations of Modern buildings:

- Lever House (Gordon Bunshaft, 1952)
- Seagram Building (including the interior of the Four Seasons restaurant) (Mies Van der Rohe, 1958)
- TWA Terminal at Kennedy Airport (Eero Saarinen, 1962)
- Manufacturer's Hanover Bank (Gordon Bunshaft, 1952)

**9. Do you have any comments you would like to add?**

The respondent noted that the broad problem of protecting Modern landmarks in large cities, where the real estate values are high and the development pressures are great, remains a significant issue that needs attention in New York City. He also referred to the dilemma of the degree to which Modern landmarks can be altered without losing their authenticity. Finally, he argued that "the most endangered species is the Modern interior, including its furnishings. The relative simplicity of the designs and the limited use of

'craftsmanship' make it difficult to convince the public that these interiors are worth salvaging".

#### **B.4 Los Angeles**

A senior officer in the Cultural Affairs Department of the City of Los Angeles provided a brief reply to this thesis questionnaire. This person was unavailable for further comment. His responses follow, and have been augmented with information from the website of Los Angeles' Cultural Affairs Department (<http://www.culturela.org/dept/arch/arch.htm>).

**1. Does the City of Los Angeles include significant Modern architecture in its definition of heritage?**

Yes.

**2. What criteria are used to determine the heritage value of Los Angeles' Modernist structures?**

As per the relevant ordinance (section 22.130 of the Los Angeles Administrative Code), any historical or cultural monument in Los Angeles is defined as that in which:

- "the broad cultural, political, economic, or social history of the nation, state, or community is reflected or exemplified, or
- which is identified with historic personages, or with important events in the main currents of national, state or local history, or
- which embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or a method of construction, or
- which embodies a notable work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age" (website)

To be eligible for landmark status, buildings must have retained their original design and materials.

**3. Where does jurisdiction or authority fall for this issue? Is it a local, regional, or national issue in terms of policy?**

All of the above. The City Council designates historic or cultural monuments on recommendation of the Cultural Heritage Commission. Once designated, "the demolition of historic buildings is discouraged by delay in issuance of permits of six months to one year and by environmental review. Demolition permits can be obtained after complying with City and State statutory requirements" (website).

**4. What policies, initiatives, or guidelines specifically address Modern heritage?**

None.

**5. Does Modern architecture fall under any general heritage conservation policies – i.e. those policies that pertain to all significant structures?**

No.

**6. Is Los Angeles' heritage policy (whether specific to Modern architecture or aimed generally at all styles of architecture) based on:**

**A. Planning and development incentives given in return for legal heritage designation and or on**

**B. protective or prohibitive measures?**

Both.

"In some cases, zoning regulations allow more flexibility in regard to historic properties. Nonconforming uses and reduced parking requirements may be permitted. Residences designated as landmarks may be eligible for limited commercial uses. Historic

structures may be eligible for a property tax reduction, and under certain conditions, a comprehensive improvement project (containing one or more buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places) can take advantage of Federal historic rehabilitation investment tax credits" (website).

**7. Have these policies regulations been successfully applied? Are they viable? Do they garner political support? Does the public support them?**

There has been a mixed response.

**8. Could you provide me with one or two examples of situations in which these policies or initiatives were exercised?**

**9. Do you have any comments you would like to add?**

### ***B.5 Phoenix***

The former Historic Preservation Officer for the City of Phoenix, replied to the questionnaire. Her responses follow.

**1. Does the City of Phoenix include significant Modern architecture in its definition of heritage?**

Yes, however Modern architecture is not recognized by specific citation.

Significant historic architectural resources are defined as those 50 years old and related to significant historic themes and/or types of buildings. As the post-WWII period was historically one of the most important eras of building and development in Phoenix, many resources representing Modern architecture fall into this general category of significance.

**2. What criteria are used to determine the heritage value of Phoenix's Modernist structures?**

The same criteria that are used for all historic structures.

**3. Where does jurisdiction or authority fall for this issue? Is it a local, regional, or national issue in terms of policy?**

It is an issue of local importance.

**4. What policies, initiatives, or guidelines specifically address Modern heritage?**

None.

**5. Does Modern architecture fall under any general heritage conservation policies – i.e. those policies that pertain to all significant structures?**

Yes.

**6. Is Phoenix's heritage policy (whether specific to Modern architecture or aimed generally at all styles of architecture) based on:**

- A. Planning and development incentives given in return for legal heritage designation and protection or on**
- B. protective or prohibitive measures?**

Both.

**7. Have these policies regulations been successfully applied? Are they viable? Do they garner political support? Does the public support them?**

Historic preservation policies in Phoenix have been successfully applied, and are considered viable. Political support in this city varies, but public support is strong enough that the historic preservation policy remains intact.



**8. Could you provide me with one or two examples of situations in which these policies or initiatives were exercised?**

A number of post-WWII neighbourhoods are listed or being considered for designation and protection under the city's historic preservation ordinance.

**9. Do you have any comments you would like to add?**

### ***B.6 Dessau***

In response to the thesis questionnaire, the Vice-Chairman of DOCOMOMO Germany provided a copy of "The Bauhaus and the World Heritage List" and "Renovating the Bauhaus Building", two chapters from the 1998 book The Dessau Bauhaus Building. The first work, in particular, (authored by Marieke Kuipers) was somewhat related to this thesis. In it, Kuipers explained that the conservation of Modern heritage is primarily a state issue in Germany, but also that in 1996, the Bauhaus and its Dessau and Weimar locations were among the first twentieth-century sites to be added to UNESCO's World Heritage List of 506 monuments of "outstanding universal value" (1).

In the end, although both works sent by this respondent were interesting and related in topic, neither was of much help for this thesis. Vancouver's Modern buildings are significant on a local and national scale, but they are not of worldwide importance and would not merit inclusion on UNESCO's World Heritage List. Thus, because this information documented the conservation efforts of a well-established multi-national organization working at the global scale, it shed little light on possibilities for adoptable policy or programs at the

civic level in Canada. It remains unclear whether or not German state policy could be applicable.