UNDERSTANDING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD MOVIE THEATRE AS A CULTURAL RESOURCE

by

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Abstract

The Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) is in an era of growth, fundamental change, and reexamination of regional and local quality of life. Within this context, the complete community policies of the Livable Region Strategic Plan have been developed to help achieve a region where human community flourishes within the built and natural environment. The complete communities concept provides people with broader diversity in the physical and social elements of community -- houses, travel, workplaces, social contacts, public services, recreation activities, shops and personal services (GVRD, 1995). By allowing this diversity, people will have a wider range of choices for urban living.

In recent years, municipalities in the GVRD have begun to recognize that cultural resources are integral to the overall health, vitality and livability of the region. The role of culture and cultural resources in maintaining and enhancing the region's livability is acknowledged in two of the complete community policies. Cultural resources are the "things" which give a neighbourhood, a city, or region its particular sense of time and place and they are the expressions of what that place is. The conservation of cultural resources to a community provides a means of making a neighbourhood, city or region more aesthetically pleasing, and thus more livable.

Neighbourhood movie theatres, for example, are one of the many types of buildings with cultural significance which may contribute to a community's character, quality of life and foster a sense of pride for residents in Vancouver communities. Neighbourhood movie theatres have been an essential component of the movie-going experience for the citizens of Vancouver since the 1930s. The purpose of this thesis is to ascertain whether cultural resources, such as a movie theatre, contribute to a complete community.
Through both a literature review and case study approach, the research sought to understand the significance of cultural resources, such as a movie theatre, to a community. The thesis focuses on the case study of the Hollywood Theatre in Kitsilano to explore how a local cultural resource contributes to the community. A survey was designed and administered to 60 patrons of the Hollywood Theatre.

The study concludes that the patrons of the Hollywood Theatre indicated that the theatre contributes to the vitality, and livability of the community. The prospects for achieving complete communities in established neighbourhoods will be influenced by local perspectives on growth, and change. Complete community objectives and strategies may be accepted locally to the degree they are seen as a means to achieve community aspirations and improve the quality of life of residents.
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to four very important people - my mother (1948-1984) "I did it again mom", my dad for his love and always believing in me, Mrs. Hunter "Ma" for always listening and rooting for me, and Garvin, for far too many reasons to count.
CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Since the 1940s the planning visions for Greater Vancouver have been to maintain and enhance the high quality of life or livability which has traditionally been enjoyed by the region's residents. In 1996 the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) adopted the Livable Strategic Plan, which is based on four fundamental, inter-related strategies:

- protecting the green zone;
- achieving a compact metropolitan area;
- building complete communities; and
- increasing transportation choice (GVRD, 1995a, p.2).

The GVRD recognizes that local perspectives and experiences have implications beyond local borders, since achieving the 'livable region,' currently depends upon policy decisions of individual communities and municipalities. One way the livable region is to be accomplished is through complete communities.

According to the GVRD, the term complete community does not refer to neighbourhoods or developments that contain everything in them. Rather, the complete communities concept provides people with broader diversity in the physical and social elements of community -- houses, travel, workplaces, social contacts, public services, recreational activities, shops and personal services (GVRD, 1995). By allowing this diversity, people will have a wider range of choices for urban living.

In recent years, municipalities in the GVRD have begun to recognize that cultural resources are integral to the overall health, vitality and livability of the region. The role of culture and cultural resources in maintaining and enhancing the region's livability is acknowledged in two of the complete community policies:
• an equitable distribution of public social and cultural services and facilities; and
• development of a network of high-quality, mixed-activity urban centres supported by an appropriate level of public transit and a range of community services and cultural facilities for residents and employees (GVRD, 1995a, p.5).

Cultural resources are the "things" which give a neighbourhood, a city, or region its particular sense of time and place and they are the expressions of what that place is. They may be defined as "the physical elements of human history that are of scientific, aesthetic, cultural, educational, economic or recreational value - they make each community what it is" (Province of British Columbia, 1987, p.10). The conservation of cultural resources to a community provides a means of making a neighbourhood, city or region more aesthetically pleasing, and thus more livable. Cultural resources make an important contribution towards establishing a community's character and the quality of life of its residents. In addition, cultural resources may foster a sense of pride for neighbourhood residents and provide a connection to the history of the surrounding area.

Neighbourhood movie theatres, for example, are one of the many types of buildings with cultural significance which may contribute to a community's character, quality of life and foster a sense of pride for residents in Vancouver communities. Neighbourhood movie theatres have been an essential component of the movie-going experience for the citizens of Vancouver since the 1930s. While many theatres have been destroyed, some neighbourhood theatres have survived and continue to flourish and play a role in their respective communities.

1.2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this thesis is to ascertain whether cultural resources, such as a movie theatre, contribute to a complete community. The Hollywood Theatre in
Kitsilano is examined as a case study. The research for this thesis is unique for two reasons. Firstly, there has been little research to examine cultural resources at the community level. Secondly, the literature on movie theatres relates primarily to the architecture of the movie theatre. However, movie theatres were once the centre of a city or town’s social and cultural life, as such there is no previous research examining the significance of movie theatres as a cultural resource. As a result, this thesis will contribute to the deficiency of literature on the importance of movie theatres in an era of their decline.

1.3 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the thesis include the following:

1. To describe the policy context by explaining the complete community strategy.

2. To describe the policy context in which cultural resources are placed.

3. To describe the historical origins of movie theatres as a cultural resource.

4. To describe how a cultural resource, such as a movie theatre, contributes to a complete community.

5. To develop a framework in order to examine the significance of cultural resources in a community.

6. To develop and administer a survey to the patrons of the Hollywood Theatre to illustrate the significance of a cultural resource in a community.
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What role do cultural resources play in contributing to the complete community concept?

2. What significance do local cultural resources have in their community?

3. How do neighbourhood movie theatres as a cultural resource contribute to a complete community?

1.5 METHODOLOGY

Information for this thesis was derived through a literature review of complete communities, cultural resources and movie theatres. To further enhance the research the Hollywood Theatre in Kitsilano was examined as a cultural resource within the community. The Hollywood Theatre is an excellent example for a case study because it is one of Vancouver's oldest theatres, and one of the few remaining independent theatres. A survey was designed and administered to 60 patrons of the Hollywood Theatre.

1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This thesis adopts a fundamentally local, or community perspective. The term complete community is subject to many different interpretations, and can be examined at several scales -- neighbourhood level, City or District, or as a regional context which results in the term complete community not being formally defined. This thesis does not attempt to assess the intrinsic merits of the complete community approach nor the theories it may derive from.
A further limitation is the numerous policies which pertain to the production and distribution of movies, but only provincial licensing policies for movie theatres were analyzed. The lack of exhibition policy limited the policy context of movie theatres.

The intent of this research is to determine the broad trend. With regard to the case study, the scope is limited to one movie theatre in one community. The results from the survey are an indication of only those individuals that attend the Hollywood Theatre, not the larger community.

1.7 THESIS ORGANIZATION

The introduction chapter has briefly outlined complete communities, cultural resources and the purpose of the thesis. Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature on complete communities and cultural resources. To understand movie theatres and the role they play, the movie theatre phenomenon will be examined in its historical perspective in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 provides background information on Kitsilano and the Hollywood Theatre. Chapter 5 reports on the methodology and the results of the survey. Chapter 6 concludes with implications of the thesis findings and further research.
CHAPTER 2 - COMPLETE COMMUNITY POLICY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As a foundation for the presentation of movie theatres as a cultural resource which follows in Chapter 3, this chapter will provide a general background discussion about complete communities and the role of cultural resources. Also, this chapter will present a set of arguments that is typically used to promote cultural resources within a community. The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate that cultural resources are recognized as important, to a community, yet, there is a limited understanding of the significance of cultural resources within a community.

The term 'complete community' is subject to different interpretations. Complete communities can be defined on several scales: at the neighbourhood level, across the City or District, and within the metropolitan or regional context. They have been equated with contemporary suburban planning and design approaches such as "The New Urbanism" and "Neo-Traditional Design," and associated with historical planning movements such as Ebenezer Howard's "garden city" and the early "street-car suburbs" (Christoforidis, 1994 and 1995). Most notably, the impetus for developing the complete community strategy, and the motivation behind the New Urbanist approaches, stem from the common assessment of the shortcomings of the current metropolitan form. The complete community concept differs from many more celebrated contemporary planning approaches however, in its perspective, aim, and application. The central distinction between it and other new urbanist approaches is the complete community focus on existing communities. The substantial and growing body of literature regarding New Urbanism is predominantly concerned with concepts, applications and critiques as they apply to new suburban development.
2.2 THE BACKGROUND

The complete community concept is a planning approach intended as a response to contemporary planning challenges. Evident in metropolitan areas across North America, these challenges include the need to manage growth and fundamental change originating at the global scale, in order to maintain and enhance the quality of life in the communities where people live and work. To achieve this goal for current and future generations, the models employed today must recognize and mitigate the costs of past development choices and more wisely and affordably integrate social, economic and environmental imperatives.

In the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), the complete community strategy was conceived as a response to three fundamental changes in the region and its residents. First, the development pattern which has emerged through successive waves of suburbanisation has resulted in a fragmented, incomplete metropolitan form. As people and houses, then shopping, jobs and commercial activity have spread across the region, urban and suburban areas have acquired many urban disadvantages – traffic congestion, air pollution, strained public services and increased personal stress – without many compensating advantages – good transit, lively pedestrian retail areas, a rich, stable social fabric and cultural or entertainment opportunities.

Secondly, the population of the region is beginning to reflect the significant quantitative and qualitative changes. It is both larger and more diverse. With smaller families, aging residents and different cultural backgrounds, individual and community needs have changed significantly. The current suburban and urban form of single-detached homes and auto-dominated lifestyle is out of step with these changes.
Thirdly, within this context of change, values are also shifting. People exhibit a keen appreciation for the environment, including a growing awareness of the degradation caused by past land use and transportation choices. At the same time, a widespread reassessment of the practical, daily experiences of working and living in the region is apparent. People recognize the need for and desire change in: the use of the auto, housing alternatives, proximity of services, shopping and employment, and an increased sense of community. At the same time, they continue to drive their cars, resist smaller “starter” homes within their neighbourhoods and oppose attempts to increase diversity of local shopping and service areas. This inconsistency between values and actions may be due to skepticism that the planning and development system can deliver sensitive, quality housing and commercial buildings suitable to established neighbourhoods. It may also reflect the fact that there is insufficient choice and opportunity within the current suburban form to allow people to live according to their values (GVRD, 1995, p. 3-5).

2.3 THE COMPLETE COMMUNITY CONCEPT

The complete community concept is defined by several key characteristics. It is a policy and strategy aimed at goals for growth management and quality of life. The complete community concept adopts a regional perspective, yet is flexible, performance-oriented and evolving. It is characterized by the key attributes of diversity, choice and compact form. The complete community concept is not an idealized theory, design template, new development approach, nor self-sufficient enclave. In this discussion, the ‘complete community’ concept is fundamentally defined as a planning and development policy and strategy, in essence a tool for achieving broader social goals.
The *Livable Region Strategic Plan* which was adopted in 1996, articulates this vision:

Greater Vancouver can become the first urban region in the world to combine in one place the things to which humanity aspires on a global basis: a place where human activities enhance rather than degrade the natural environment, where the quality of the built environment approaches that of the natural setting, where the diversity of origins and religions is a source of social strength rather than strife, where people control the destiny of their community, and where the basics of food, clothing, shelter, security and useful activity are accessible to all (GVRD, 1995, p.5).

To achieve this vision, the GVRD has adopted four primary and inter-related policy goals:

- protecting the green zone,
- increasing transportation choice,
- achieving a compact metropolitan region and
- building complete communities (GVRD, 1995a, p.2).

Taken together, these policy initiatives form the foundation of an integrated land use and transportation plan aimed at managing growth, and maintaining and enhancing quality of life.

Importantly, these goals are *shared* goals. The goals are the result of a four year consultation process which rejected a "business as usual" approach to development. The "business as usual" process yields the common assessment that current development trends would inevitably lead to further encroachment on farmland and valued land resources, increased dependence on the automobile, greater costs in terms of air quality, commuting, public infrastructure, and a reduction in the livability of the region so valued by residents (Kellas, 1994, p.21). Furthermore, as the first Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) under the Provincial *Growth Strategies Act*, the *Livable Region Strategic Plan* commits municipalities and the Regional District to a course of action to meet common social, economic and environmental objectives for managing growth (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 1996). In doing so, a clear objective of the policies is to preserve the elements of existing communities.
that current residents value, and to find ways to make the transition to more complete communities as beneficial and unobtrusive as possible.

The nature of the complete community concept as a policy and strategy is reflected in the GVRD Livable Region Strategic Plan, which portrays complete communities as “intended to support the public's strong desire for communities with a wider range of opportunities for day-to-day life” (GVRD, 1995a, p.2). This strategy will be implemented by the GVRD (through its Regional District Board of Directors) through actions related to the delivery of regional services, and a process of numerous voluntary partnerships. Through partnerships with the federal and provincial governments, other regional districts, organizations and the GVRD member municipalities, complete community policies seek:

- a better balance in jobs and labour force location throughout the region;
- a better diversity of housing types, tenures costs in each part of the region in balance with job distribution;
- an equitable distribution of public social and cultural services and facilities;
- development of a network of high-quality, mixed activity urban centres supported by an appropriate level of public transit and a range of community services and cultural facilities for residents and employees;
- development of telecommunications services and infrastructure that facilitate a reduction in travel demand, remove barriers to job location within the region, and support the growth of a modern economy;
- promotion of private sector investment in the business growth of centres; and
- development of transportation services and facilities that support local access to centres (GVRD, 1995, p.5).

These policy objectives are not ends in themselves, but rather means to achieving even greater regional goals. Communities or neighbourhoods are living organisms -- they will adapt to secure their survival and success. To do so, will require distinctive adaptations of complete community principles (Kellas, 1994).
2.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF COMPLETE COMMUNITIES

2.4.1 Diversity and Choice

The GVRD describes a complete community as one which "provides people with broader diversity in the physical and social elements of community: houses, travel, shops, workplaces, services, and social contacts" (GVRD, 1995, p.6). This involves "bringing urban choices, amenities and services closer to people's homes and people's homes closer to urban choices, amenities and services" (GVRD, 1993, p.10).

Apparent in these concepts are the fundamental attributes of complete communities within a regional setting: diversity, choice and a compact form. The diversity-choice dynamic operating within a compact setting has implications for a range of more specific characteristics of complete communities. Accommodating a greater mix in land use may foster opportunities for local shopping, employment or entertainment. Increasing these choices within a compact configuration enables and supports transit, services, commerce, walking and cycling. This in turn, implies a more human-scaled community. By fostering diversity within a compact form, people will have a greater range of choice in conducting their daily lives. From these newly available choices, can flow impacts on auto use, air quality, transit and infrastructure efficiencies, and individual and public affordability. Overall, complete communities can be seen to:

- organize growth on a regional level to be compact and transit supportive
- have a recognizable focus and community identity
- be well defined but flexible, of varying size and specialization depending on regional and local roles
- promote quality design, shaped by the local natural and built environment
- emphasize and reflect investment in the public realm (whether natural or built)
- be human-scaled, pedestrian and transit-oriented, with commerce, housing, jobs, parks and civic uses centrally located within walking distance of transit
- focus on linkages, including physical, social and communication connections
• support a mix and diversity of uses and people
• be ecological and resource efficient, preserving habitat and high quality open space and promoting effective, efficient and conservationist design approaches (Calthorpe, 1993, p.41-55).

Complete communities pursue greater diversity and choice as the prerequisites to regional, local and individual quality of life. Diversity and choice, are of course, defining characteristics and benefits of a metropolitan society. Complete community thinking acknowledges this reality and does not aspire to creating self-sufficient enclaves which contain everything they need within their own boundaries, as may have earlier been conceived (Perkins, 1995, p.16). Rather, the aim is a flexible, complementary, regional ensemble of communities which are relatively more compact and complete than they are now. While the complete community goal is tempered by realism, the challenge it represents is not trivial. Planning for and building diversity, choice and compactness into the existing urban context represents an approach very different from the practices and thinking of the past half a century of metropolitan development. It reflects a fundamental redirection of thought regarding urban planning and design, from the quantitative to the qualitative, from the hierarchical to the participatory, from the individual to the community, from competitive to co-operative, from absolute to relative, from uniformity to diversity and from knowing to feeling” (Spaxman, 1994, p.7).

2.5 COMPREHENSIVE POLICIES

2.5.1 Land Use, Transportation and a Community Focus

In the GVRD, a compact configuration – a community core focus – is used as the vehicle by which to integrate land use and transportation planning and development. According to the GVRD, more complete communities will be achieved by increasing diversity in three key areas: housing alternatives in the middle range between
apartments and single-detached houses, transportation alternatives to the automobile, and community cores of varying sizes, to provide people with more opportunities to shop, work and enjoy life closer to home (GVRD, 1995, p.1). The community core is seen as the essential focus for integrating land use and transportation options in a more complete community. To create an effective community core requires shopping and personal services, public services and facilities and other workplaces (GVRD, 1995, p.18). It also requires public, as opposed to private space, to create vitality, security and appealing reasons for people to use it.

2.5.2 Increasing Housing Diversity

GVRD housing policy statements call for increasing medium density options -- townhouses, duplexes, and small lot homes -- that use land, energy and public utilities more efficiently than the single family home, yet retain its desired features. These housing options should be provided throughout the region to improve opportunities to choose an appropriate form of housing closer to regular travel destinations and social and recreational opportunities. Recommended first steps to creating this increased housing diversity include: acquiring a preliminary understanding of the preferences of the region's residents, the range of housing forms applicable to these needs, a reassessment of current land use regulations, and a more in-depth understanding of neighbourhood dynamics (GVRD, 1995a, p.7-9).

2.5.3 Increasing of Travel Options

GVRD policy for increasing diversity in travel options represents a realignment of thought regarding the purpose of transportation. It attempts to shift the perceptions that transportation is fundamentally to move vehicles around, to a more comprehensive notion that its role is to provide people with access to the goods and
services and activities which satisfy their needs. From this perspective, the first priority becomes achieving access through proximity. This involves ensuring that goods, services and opportunities are close to the neighbourhoods of those who use them. For those trips which cannot be made by foot or cycle, convenient alternatives to the car, such as a community shuttle bus are contemplated. The second priority is access through transmission. This includes the physical transmission of goods and services through delivery and other community travel, as well as the electronic transmission of information. The third priority is access through travel. The policies recognize that an efficient arterial road system will always be required in the region, but suggest that if alternative forms of travel are made available, individual travel by car need not be the predominant use of the system. As well, priority for access to the network -- from automobiles to bicycles, transit and high-occupancy automobiles -- can shift. Where the choice to travel across the region by car continues to be made, the full economic, environmental and social costs of that choice should be reflected in tolls, insurance and other fees. Since changing established, regional infrastructure patterns will be difficult and expensive, the move to complete communities should begin with a focus on local public transit solutions and improved cycle and pedestrian access to activity centres (GVRD, 1995a, p.10-14).

2.5.4 Community Cores

The physical foundation of a good community is more than the character of its streets and houses. The essential requirement for complete communities is that goods, services and opportunities needed for everyday living be close to homes and be easily reached by travel modes other than the automobile. This means that wherever people live in the region, there should be a nearby shopping, recreation and public services district where people can get what they need.
A community core is the proper focus for local transportation networks of all kinds -- walking, cycling, busing and driving. Without the core, walking and cycling are not feasible, busing is difficult and driving is the only realistic option for people. A community core is also the proper focus for an increased diversity of housing opportunities. Without the core, any increase in housing diversity or local population translates directly into an increased population of drivers. And a community core without sufficient local patrons will either wither or be forced to adapt to attract a wider population -- both of which will again increase the amount of driving in the region.

The current literature on complete communities explains the elements of the concept, defends why it is better than other types of urban development, criticizes it as a solution to the suburban problems or else describes the plan for a future complete community development. One area devoid of documentation is an understanding of the significance of cultural resources within complete communities, although it is stated in the complete community policy. Furthermore, there is no examination of the implications for communities to have cultural resources. The next section will examine cultural resources and the arguments for cultural resources.

2.6 CULTURAL RESOURCES

*Cultural resources are not for a privileged few, but for the many...their place is not at the periphery of society, but at its centre...they are not just a form of recreation, but are of central importance to our well-being and happiness (Schafer, 1982).*

Arts and culture are an essential part of the economic and social vitality of many nations, regions and communities. "Culture in all forms is the essence and key expression of identity and heritage" (Canada, 1999, p.1). When people speak of culture they speak about more than the visual, performing or literary arts. They often refer to cultural institutions such as galleries, museums, libraries, archives, concert
halls and theatres. Typically reports begin with the challenge of defining culture. However, it is soon discovered that one person’s sense of culture is another’s popular entertainment, and where one defines it as the soul of their country, another might see it as the way one earns a living.

Culture is one of the most difficult words in the English language, with definitions from the sociological, to the aesthetic. According to one author “culture is the answer we receive when we look into the mirror and wonder what it is we are doing here on this earth” (Pelletier, 1968, pg. 4). According to a recent definition into the inquiry into culture, “a citizen’s sense of place is central to an understanding and experience of culture. We do no live in ant hills, but in places that mean something” (Bumbaru, 1999, p.1).

Culture encompasses the way people eat, talk, think, meet others, go to work, spend their free time, and plan their holidays. If cities and towns in the future are to remain livable, they should be places where all of these activities have space, inter-relate, and are pleasurable. Rather than being an add-on to the serious concerns of the economy and the ‘hard’ infrastructure of urban areas, culture is central to the way cities should develop.

The next section will examine the policy framework for cultural resources. A set of arguments typically used to promote the preservation of cultural resources in a community will be outlined.

2.7 POLICY FRAMEWORK

All levels of government have recognized the important role that cultural resources play in the quality of life for its citizens. Initially, cultural development was carried out on an ad hoc basis by each level of government (Berton, 1975). The original
constitutional division of powers in 1867 granted the Canadian provinces substantial responsibility in the field of education, which included culture. However, increased urbanization, higher levels of education, and increased affluence and leisure time provided a base for the rapid development in cultural activities. In Canada, these conditions started to emerge during the late 1940s and they promised to bring a new dimension to the quality of Canadian life.

The federal government, alert to the new possibilities and potentials, responded by initiating the Massey Commission. As a result of the Massey Commission, federal support for culture and communications was formally institutionalized following the release of the pivotal Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (Massey Report) in 1951, which led to the establishment of the National Library of Canada in 1953 and the creation of the Canada Council in 1957. Presently, with respect to culture, the federal role, through the Department of Canadian Heritage, is to “help develop the means and infrastructure necessary for the creation, production and distribution of Canadian cultural content” (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2000).

Following the federal government’s lead, provincial governments swung into action in the 1960s. Virtually all the provinces and territories have ministries of culture whose work parallels that of the federal Department of Canadian Heritage in the area of cultural policy programs. Consequently, each province has developed its own cultural policy and distinct mechanisms for implementing policy, including ministries for culture, organizations and agencies. In British Columbia, for example, cultural policies are made by the Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture. The cultural policy for British Columbia states, “Governments have a responsibility to protect the cultural heritage and promote the artistic expression of their citizens. The British Columbia Cultural Policy affirms the basis for the Province’s commitment to our cultural life” (Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture, 2000).
2.7.1 Municipal

As the field of cultural resources assumes greater importance in our leisure-oriented society, greater expectations are placed on all levels of government to help provide basic opportunities for people to enjoy cultural activities. However, the growth in cultural resources has been primarily assisted and guided by federal and provincial levels of government. Municipal governments, whether by intent or default, "have had only limited involvement in the policy debates and decisions affecting the direction and nature of part development in cultural activities" (Schafer 1982, p.8) [Italics in original].

While many municipalities recognize that they have a financial responsibility toward cultural resources, many argue that they must face the realities of their funding base. Cities everywhere in Canada have restricted means of taxation. The predicament of the Canadian municipalities is clearly evident when the allocation of taxation powers of the three levels of government is examined. At the federal level, means of taxation are theoretically unlimited, but become progressively more limited at the provincial and municipal level. Municipalities may use only those means of taxation that are laid down by provincial legislation. "As a result of postwar federal-provincial tax agreements, all municipalities were required to vacate personal and corporate income tax fields" (Schafer, 1982, p.9). Today, the only tax of any significance at the municipal level is property tax.

A major force in promoting the quality of life and a more humanistic society, cultural resources in Canada today command a broad social acceptance. Cultural resources are increasingly viewed not as a social frill, but as an essential component of daily life. This increased popular demand provides a fitting climate for stronger municipal leadership in the cultural sector.
Culture as a focus for urban public policy making is recent. In 1978, the Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA), Canada's arts advocacy organization, held its annual national gathering on the theme of municipal cultural policy, claiming that "local government involvement in the arts has lagged" (Bailey, 1978, p. 2). A decade later, the CCA again focussed its annual national conference on municipal cultural policy, evidently feeling that municipal governments still needed prodding. By 1991, when the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) conducted research into the cultural support provided by their member municipalities, they could report that "most municipalities indicated that they have developed policy and support mechanisms to assist arts, culture and heritage in their communities" (FCM, 1991, p. 2). Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, and Kitchener sponsored major cultural inquiries in the first half of the 1990's; and the Greater Vancouver Regional District recently initiated a regional cultural planning process.

2.7.2 Greater Vancouver Regional District

Since 1967, the municipalities of Greater Vancouver have succeeded in creating an effective partnership among the now 20 municipalities and two electoral areas that make up the metropolitan area. The primary aim in forging this partnership has been for municipalities to deliver a range of services on a regional basis when warranted for reasons of effectiveness, economy and fairness.

In 1975, as background for the Livable Region Strategy, the GVRD commissioned a policy report on Regional Town Centres which provided an analysis of the regional, sub-regional and local cultural interests of the region. The GVRD report explained the role and benefits of cultural development, and expressed a need for cultural planning to play a full role in the development of both regional town centres and the region as a whole.
In the GVRD's 1997 report, *Arts and Culture in Greater Vancouver: Contributing to the Livable Region*, while detailing the social benefits of culture to the greater Vancouver region, they emphasize the many economic benefits, and point out the links between the health and vitality of a community and the flourishing of the commercial arts and culture sector, cultural industries, tourism, and even the “spill-over effects felt in a host of related fields from advertising to fashion design to computer software development” (GVRD, 1997 p. 7). The population, demographic and cultural diversity changes of the past decade are seen as part of the regional reality to be addressed in a cultural plan. The report tied cultural planning to “building complete communities within a livable region,” an objective of the *Livable Region Strategic Plan* (LRSP).

The role of culture in maintaining and enhancing the region's livability is explicitly acknowledged in the LRSP through two of its complete communities policies, which state that the GVRD will seek through partnerships to achieve:

- an equitable distribution of public social and cultural services and facilities; and
- development of a network of high-quality, mixed-activity urban centres supported by an appropriate level of public transit and a range of community services and cultural facilities for residents and employees (GVRD, 1995, p.5).

The LRSP recognized a critical factor in successfully building complete communities will be to ensure that the necessary cultural services and facilities are in place to serve the needs of a growing and diverse population. Planning now for the cultural facilities and programs of strategic importance to municipalities and the region will help to achieve this objective. It is recognized as a process that “should not be put aside for a later time given the work currently underway at the regional level in areas such as transportation and land use planning, which must take into consideration cultural need, issues and opportunities” (GVRD, 1997 p.10). It is evident that the municipalities of the GVRD recognize culture is integral to the overall health, vitality and livability of the region.
To help ensure that the cultural policies are acted upon, the GVRD Board approved a strategic cultural planning initiative, and the appointment of a Steering committee, composed of staff from member municipalities, and began a process to understand the role of cultural activities in the region. Their mandate was to:

- develop a plan to meet the cultural needs of Greater Vancouver, addressing issues of cultural development, cultural diversity, economic development and population growth;
- ensure an efficient and effective process of cultural development based on a regional strategic plan and through the coordination of cultural planning, facility development and support programs; and
- ensure a broad range of high quality cultural services to meet the needs of both residents and visitors to the Lower Mainland (GVRD, 1997, p.3).

In September 1999 the Regional Cultural Plan Steering Committee produced *Strategies for Regional Arts and Cultural Development in Greater Vancouver*. This document offers a vision and strategies for realizing municipal and regional objectives and addressing the issues and challenges facing arts and culture in Greater Vancouver. The proposed strategic directions and actions are to provide a framework for support of the activities of region-serving cultural organizations in the communities. The framework is intended to “help coordinate a complex and evolving web of activities in arts and culture that have strategic, region-wide importance” (GVRD, 1999, p.7).

The Steering Committee was made up of the cultural officers of the GVRD member municipalities, and they proceeded by commissioning research and studies; consultation with the public was not part of the process. The steering committee process was expert-driven, largely in-house, involving the immediate stakeholders. The process proposed for the development of the regional cultural plan involves contacting and orientating stakeholders, which includes arts and cultural organizations and potential partners; then developing the issues, policy options and
priorities with stakeholders and elected officials. At this point, the general public will be among those invited to provide feedback on the proposals.

The above section has outlined how cultural resources are recognized as important from the federal to the municipal level. The next section will examine the policy framework pertaining to the movie industry.

2.8 MOVIE POLICIES

There are numerous policies at the federal and provincial level that relate to the production of films in Canada, and the Canadian content in films. There are some policies which pertain to the exhibition of movies, however, those policies relate to the exhibition of Canadian movies. The only policies pertaining to movie exhibition related to this thesis are the licensing of movie theatres by the provincial government.

The first policy toward film production was in 1951 with the Massey report. The Massey Report came to this rather ominous conclusion in its chapter entitled "Films in Canada":

The cinema at present is not only the most potent but also the most alien of the influences shaping our Canadian life. Nearly all Canadians go to the movies; and most movies come from Hollywood...Hollywood refashions us in its own image (Canada, 1951, p.50).

From the earliest days of the cinema, Canada (more than any other country in the world) has been inundated by the movies of Hollywood. Canadian audiences became accustomed to the narratives and genres of Hollywood. Hollywood’s stars were Canada’s stars. There was concern because before television “Hollywood produced over 500 feature films about Canada, conservatively estimated to be ten times the number of feature films that Canadians made about themselves” (Berton,
Most of Hollywood's "Canadian" films were shot on studio backlots or in the southern California countryside. "Their depiction of Canadian life was stereotypical in the extreme. Canada was a wild and scenic outback, sparsely populated by prospectors, lumberjacks, fur traders, Indians and Mounties. And of course it was almost always snowing" (Magder, 1993, p.147). Canadian films were the exception, they were "foreign films" in their own national space. As a result, policies were developed on film production industry, not the exhibition industry.

2.8.1 BC Film Exhibition Policy

The exhibition of movies is controlled by the provincial government. In accordance with the provisions of the Motion Picture Act and Regulations, the Film Classification Office serves the public by:

- classifying films and approving adult films;
- licensing distributors, theatres and video stores;
- enforcing provisions of the Act;
- providing consumers with information regarding the content of films and videos;
- limiting access by minors to material that is unsuitable for their age; and
- controlling material which is not in accordance with community standards (British Columbia Film Classification, 2000).

The Film Classification Office regulates the public exhibition, rental and distribution of films and videos in British Columbia. All films shown publicly and all videos sold or rented through video retail outlets must be viewed and classified by the Film Classification Office. The Motion Picture Act gives the Director of Film Classification the authority to refuse or approve the exhibition or distribution of a film or video or to order the removal of prohibited material. The office licenses theatres, (valid for only one year) film and video distributors and video retailers and conducts regular inspections of all licencees.
2.9 ARGUMENTS FOR CULTURAL RESOURCES

Municipalities across Canada have been formulating cultural plans, and by doing so have recognized the fundamental role cultural resources play in everyday life. The Greater Vancouver Region is no exception and as noted above they have seen the need to plan their cultural future. The following arguments are commonly used to promote cultural resources. Chapter 5 applies these arguments to the Hollywood Theatre to determine the significance of a movie theatre as a cultural resource in the community.

2.9.1 Social

*Cultural activities are always the index of social vitality, the moving finger that records the destiny of a civilization.* Sir Herbert Read

Cultural resources are almost by definition a "social benefit". Many see cultural resources as a benefit because "they are conducive to an environment which can be enjoyed by the population" (Denhez, 1978). Social benefits, however being difficult to quantify, have tended to be underestimated in terms of significance and impacts. Social benefits include:

- strengthening social cohesion and establishing common ground between generations and cultures;
- creating and preserving cultural heritage, which provides community identity, distinctiveness and collective pride;
- providing diversity and choice in leisure, entertainment and celebration opportunities; and
- providing opportunities for public involvement and support through participation, and consumption (Denhez, 1978).

Cultural resources offer members of a community a place to meet and share experiences. A community that "values, and maintains cultural resources that establish the public realm of their community (e.g., libraries, movie theatres or schools), and use these places for public gathering will foster a sense of place
among the residents" (Ahlbrandt and Cunningham, 1979, p. 21). By utilizing the cultural resources in their community, people learn how they fit into the larger community and beyond.

Movie theatres as a cultural resource may be a venue of leisure/entertainment for the members of the community. Leisure can be broadly defined as “those activities an individual selects for reasons other than sustaining life” (Austin, 1989 p. 21). Going to the movies, or sporting events is a “commercial spectator amusements for which the individual must pay money in order to participate, many people participate simultaneously, which occur outside the home, and is conducted for profit” (Austin 1989, p.22).

Motion pictures were among the most popular turn-of-the-century commercial amusements and as a result, the neighbourhood movie theatre found itself surrounded by a huge potential audience numbering in the thousands (Valentine 1994). Movies became an important cultural resource over other forms of commercial leisure, such as fairs, because of the regularity with which they were offered -- daily. Moreover, movies played virtually continuously, at a single location, and offered a variety of stories.

Movies are in competition with other forms of leisure activity (especially television) for the consumer's time and money. As a result, movie production companies have attempted to convince the potential viewer that seeing a particular movie is a social event of such magnitude that missing it would reduce one to the level of social misfit or “untouchable.”
2.9.2 Environment

The district must mingle buildings that vary in age and condition, including a good proportion of old ones. Cities need old buildings so badly it is probably impossible for vigorous streets and districts to grow without them. Jane Jacobs, 1961.

Many neighbourhood theatres were built in Vancouver during the 1930s and 1940s. Many have been demolished, while the remaining few have withstood the changes and growth within their respective communities. These remaining theatres contribute to the cultural landscape that contributes to the social identity of a neighbourhood.

Many who wish to preserve cultural resources are attracted to the aesthetic features with which cultural structures endow their communities and landscapes. In a constantly changing environment, there is a need for old buildings to add a sense of permanence and perspective to our lives. They provide a basis for seeing where we have been, for measuring how far we have come, and for evaluating where we are going.

The history of Canada is reflected in the older buildings and neighbourhoods located in or near the downtown core of our cities. These old buildings and neighbourhoods, in addition to their functional and social importance to the people who use and live in them, often comprise irreplaceable and outstanding symbols of our nation’s history and heritage. Some may be of national significance, others provincial, others local. Some sites and buildings of historical and cultural value have been saved, but more have been lost. With higher education levels, rising incomes and greater leisure time, the importance of these areas could increase in future years enriching the lives of residents and non-residents alike (Falkner, 1977, p.8). (Italics added.)

Cultural resources as physical structures may take on the function of a landmark in their community in one of two ways. Firstly, cultural resources which are physically distinct from their proximal buildings may provide an interesting counterbalance to modern architecture and add character to the community’s streetscape. As a landmark the building provides both orientation and makes the community more distinctive (Jacobs, 1961; Kalman, 1979).
Secondly, centres of activity, where the paths of many people come together in concentrated fashion, are important places economically and socially in cities. Sometimes they are important in the life of a city as a whole, sometimes to a particular district or neighbourhood. People become deeply attached to landmarks that occur in centres of activity. A particular building on a centrally located site is important for residents of the city and neighbourhood. Beyond the functional need for a building, such a landmark building can help to anchor diversity (Jacobs, 1961; Kalman, 1979).

2.9.3 Economic

A community that stimulates and challenges the individual is a better community and will provide better customers, better employees and a better business climate than one where there is little stimulation. We think cultural activities are the prime source of this stimulation. 

Melvin Fraser, IBM, Canada, Ltd.

Often, the primary selling point for the retention and maintenance of cultural resources is economics. The economic aspects of cultural conservation were first outlined by George Galt in Investigating in the Past (1974). Cultural resources provide economic benefits to the public at large, as well as to individual’s. The primary benefit the general public receives is through employment. In the Greater Vancouver area, direct, indirect and induced employment in the cultural sector accounts for 11 percent of the regional work force and contributes $2.3 billion in wages and salaries (Pricewaterhouse Coopers, 1999, p.5). However, most of the benefits derived from cultural resources are at the individual level.

Cultural resources which attract a large number of users, such as movie theatres, viewscapes, or even sports events, play an important role in enlivening the retail vitality of their community. Furthermore, cultural resources within a neighbourhood lead to wider economic spinoffs for other businesses. Businesses that attract a large number of users are called “anchor” businesses, other businesses are symbiotic, living off the patrons drawn by the anchors.
All businesses provide basic and supportive services for residents of a community. Restaurants, shops, entertainment, and local transportation receive much of its revenue from residents. The greater the use of facilities in a community, the more attached, loyal and satisfied are the residents. Residents who make much greater use of the community (e.g. shopping and recreation) are generally happier and more satisfied (Ahlbrandt, 1984).

2.9.4 Education

The educational argument is the oldest rationale for maintaining cultural resources: it is the argument which was used to justify the world’s first conservation statute in Rome in 457 A.D. It seeks the protection of structures because of their capacity to evoke the people or events (historical, cultural and otherwise) associated with them. Cultural resources are irreplaceable educational assets. It is easier to understand and appreciate the past and present by experiencing actual environments and functioning buildings than by relying upon books and museums. It has been argued that the benefits of cultural resources can teach us something fundamental about the society which erected the structure in question and thus about the dynamics of our own society and civilization itself.

2.10 SUMMARY

Preservation of cultural resources may be justified for social, economic, environmental and educational reasons. Cultural resources are argued to enrich our daily lives by offering a richness and vitality to our environment. The conservation of cultural resources provides a means of making a city more aesthetically pleasing, and thus more livable. Cultural resources make an important contribution towards
establishing a community's character and the quality of life of its residents, and may also foster a sense of pride for neighbourhood residents.

This chapter has outlined the policy context of complete communities. Furthermore, this chapter has illustrated that cultural resources are recognized as important to the complete community policy and the arguments for cultural resources were delineated. The next chapter will examine the history of movie theatres as a cultural resource, followed by the case study, the Hollywood Theatre in Chapter 4.
CHAPTER 3 - MOVIE THEATRES AS A CULTURAL RESOURCES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

I can remember a time when where we went to the movies was just as important as the movies we went to see...From the moment moviegoers arrived to buy their tickets, there was a sense of something special, a feeling that to step inside was to enter another time and place. (Naylor, 1981, p.25).

The previous chapter outlined the complete community strategy and cultural resource policy. This chapter will chronicle the history of movie theatres, from the nickel and vaudeville theatres through the rise and fall of the beloved movie palaces, and finally to the contemporary phenomenon of the mega-theatre. Furthermore, two movie theatres in Vancouver which have been saved and restored will be discussed. The intention is to set the stage for Chapter 5 to clarify whether movie theatres as a cultural resource enhance a community.

There are numerous activities or places that may be considered a cultural resource. The development of motion pictures as a mass medium involved a series of cycles, each with some driving force that would help cultivate a mass audience that would develop the movie going habit. Each new invention, improvement in content, and in the luxuriousness of the exhibition hall would propel the industry through a ratchet-type effect to a new, higher equilibrium level.

Going to the movies has been a social event since the late 1800s and is still a very prominent social activity as we enter the 21st century. The movie theatre as it developed into a unique building type during the first half of the twentieth century “was both a product and a symbol of its time. It created an emotionally charged atmosphere in which millions learned about life, culture, politics, romance and sex through what was shown and implied and what was both said and suggested on screen” (Valentine, 1994, p.5). Movies contained archetypes who represented ideals, possibilities and pitfalls. The theatre housing these models reflected a tangible expression of hopes and dreams. Theatre buildings formed the visual
centrepieces of major commercial streets in most North American cities and small towns. In addition to creating an atmosphere appropriate for synesthesia, the theatres are remembered and recalled decades later for the purely sensory pleasures they provided. Even after many years, people recall the feel of the nap of the seat fabric, the smell of popcorn and chocolate mixed with stale cigarette smoke, or the distinctive feel and sound of folding seats edged on cold metal going up and down (Valentine, 1994).

Many movie theatres in the early 1900s were the "centre of the city's social and cultural life" (Russell, 1975, p.2). When the movie houses were built, their drawing power far exceeded that of any other form of entertainment — they offered stage shows, orchestral and theatre organ entertainment and the most recent motion pictures in exciting, expensive and up-to-date surroundings at competitive prices. Now the stage shows, orchestras and theatre organs are gone, and many theatre patrons live in the suburbs. If there is nothing on television, people can see new movies in suburban theatres or in small cinemas in downtown shopping complexes which offer parking facilities. The movie houses no longer attract enough regular patronage to warrant the cost of maintaining them and paying the spiralling taxes on their expensive sites.

3.2 IN THE BEGINNING

To understand movie theatres and the role they played, the movie theatre phenomenon must first be examined in its historical perspective. Until 1902, there was no such thing as a movie theatre in a permanent location, though motion pictures as a commercial medium were then eight years old. During these years they were generally exhibited in penny arcades and fairground tents, and also crowded into vaudeville theatre programmes. After 1902 they found exclusive and more or
less permanent homes in small, stuffy converted stores with rudimentary furnishings, characterized by many as "firetraps and pestholes [which upset] the social balance and public morals" (Crowther, 1957, p. 30). A little over a decade after the appearance of the primitive store theatre, movies had become the feature attraction in edifices to be called theatres. With the exception of newspaper and motion picture trade journal articles and promotional material, not much was written about movie houses in their heyday, although at the time movie houses “enjoyed more patronage than any other single type of public building” (Russell, 1975, p. 4).

Motion pictures were initially displayed in a viewing apparatus about the size of a filing cabinet. This device, called a “Kinetoscope,” was essentially a coin operated peepbox in which one viewer could watch for a minute or less an illuminated cylinder of about 15 metres of celluloid film revolving on spools. These machines were first commercially exhibited in North America on 14 April 1894 in New York. Soon afterward, Kinetoscopes appeared in parlours (small stores which also offered phonographs) in curio shops and as fairground novelties. Initially, large- scale theatrical-like presentations were not the concern of entrepreneurs; the movies were to be shown to individual customers.⁵

On 23 April 1896 motion pictures were screened to a paying audience in a vaudeville⁶ theatre in New York. The

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Figure 3.1: This programme highlights the vaudeville acts and the first movies shown in 1896 (Source: Lindsay, 1999).
vaudeville turns were followed by film selections such as *Sea Waves, Kaiser Wilhelm reviewing his Troops and Burlesque Boxing*. Figure 3.1 illustrates the playbill of the movies that were showing when for the very first time movies became part of a theatre performance. For the first time, motion pictures became "life sized," and were revealed to the audience.

In 1897 the idea of showing a few short films with a stage show spread quickly. After their commercial screen debut, motion pictures continued to be shown in vaudeville theatres as one of the many attractions on the bill. Little expenditure was required to introduce moving pictures to a vaudeville programme.

A simple screen was erected, often of plain muslin on a wooden or iron frame, and an area sealed off for projection equipment. When the stage was in use... the screen was lifted into the fly tower or carefully rolled and stored at the back behind the flats (Sharp 1969, p.70).

Many Canadians had their first film experience when the *Great Train Robbery* was presented on the Midway at the Canadian National Exhibition (Toronto) in 1903. This 12 minute story was complete with movie stunts and thrilling action. One scene in particular "scared the pants off viewers": when an outlaw pointed the barrel of his gun straight into the camera and fired, seemingly into the audience's face (Russell, 1989).

Motion pictures were associated with vaudeville for about 30 years in the United States and Canada. Initially, the novelty of seeing life-sized moving pictures was popular with vaudeville patrons. But early moving pictures were short, 30 metres to 300 metres in length, often flickering and hard on the eyes (mostly because of imperfect projection), and were usually devoid of narrative interest. Such subjects as a moving train, sea waves or various vaudeville acts were filmed. By the turn of the century, moving pictures had lost their novelty value, and were offered in vaudeville houses merely as "chasers" to indicate a new show was approaching and the house should be cleared (Lanken, 1993).
By about 1914, with the introduction of feature-length films (more than 4 reels), the star system (the promotion of movies using well-known film actors) and a permanent industry in Hollywood, motion pictures had come a long way from being a poor relation as a commercial medium and had eclipsed their former master vaudeville, in content, scope and commercial appeal. Throughout the 1920s theatres continued to be built with stage facilities even though vaudeville had become virtually a thing of the past. Furthermore, moving pictures were exhibited by travelling showmen (mostly in the summer in Canada) in community halls, empty stores rented for a week or two, on vacant lots covered with tarpaulin, and at amusement parks, circuses and fairs.

The closest thing to a specially designed accommodation for the movies in Canada up to 1902 seems to have been a black tent which John A. Schuberg, a travelling showman in the western provinces, averred that he devised about 1900. The tent measured 6 metres by 18 metres and seated 200 people. Made of black canvas with an interior of black flannel to keep out the sunlight, it had a side wall which could be raised at the end of the show to cool off the patrons. The exterior was decorated with a marquee-like banner on poles, together with fairly lurid paintings or posters advertising the movie inside. Schuberg conceded, “I may not have been the first to think up the black tent, but I had not heard of any others” (McCallum, 1948).

As a travelling showman, Schuberg had exhibited movies for two weeks in 1898 on Cordova Street in Vancouver, British Colombia. He recounted that he had “rented a fairly large, empty warehouse..., set up the equipment near the front and hung the screen at the back. As the show could only run about 30 minutes, seats were not necessary” (Russell, 1975, p.5).

Until about 1905-06 shortages of film generally obliged exhibitors to keep moving. They usually bought a limited quantity of films from producing companies and exhibited in as many locations as it took for their prints to wear out. Permanent
movie theatres were not established in quantity until there was sufficient film available for rent to exhibitors from film exchanges to allow for regular changes of programme on one site, and until the advent of the story picture. When these conditions were met, the general standard of the motion picture took no great leaps forward.

### 3.2.1 Nickelodeons

Between 1905 and 1907, more or less permanent cinemas were established in small converted stores, dance halls and converted penny arcades. These were their habitual locations, but the showing of movies could also be found in skating rinks, deconsecrated churches, or in virtually any building (preferably on a main street) that was available at a reasonable rental.

To convert a small commercial establishment into a movie theatre, enterprising exhibitors replaced the store fronts with a set of doors and a small wooden box office set back from the sidewalk, thus creating a tiny "lobby" which was decorated with florid movie lithographs. The strident music and announcements of a phonograph and a barker in this area were additional enticements. Usually, the theatre’s name was inscribed on either a large canvas, wooden or electric sign over the entrance doors (Pratt, 1966). Some of these premises were perhaps 8 metres wide and 30 metres long and, as auditoriums were narrow, dark and ill-ventilated. They seated as many as the room would hold, either on unfastened “kitchen” chairs, wooden benches nailed together in rows, or on folding chairs rented by the day from undertaking or catering establishments. (In the latter case, patrons were forced to stand when the owners reclaimed their chairs) (Russel, 1970).

When there was a full house, the auditorium was oppressively hot; a 1907 store show exhibitor recalled that “there was an average of two women fainting every Saturday night, and they were wedged in so tight they couldn’t fall” (Russel, 1970).
On such nights, the air in the auditorium quickly became stale and sour. Some measure of relief was afforded by thoughtful exhibitors who installed small wall fans (which mostly churned up stale air) or who occasionally left a door open. From time to time, vain attempts were made to deodorize the auditorium by aiming a garden sprayer over the heads of the assembly (Russel, 1970).

It was widely assumed that the best picture was projected in the darkest auditorium, thus any windows were covered with black cloth (or paper), and interior decorations were, in most cases, non-existent or minimal (Collins, 1927). Often the projector was merely roped off in the middle or at the back of the room. If a cloth-covered projection booth was provided, it was usually barely large enough for one projector and the operator, and he could not move about without agitating the “walls” of the booth. The projectors were hand-cranked, and were equipped with a stereopticon attachment, frequently used to project a slide asking for “One Moment Please” (Collins, 1927). The film fed through the projector accumulated in a heap either in a galvanized iron tank or, in the “cheaper” houses, in a barrel, cloth bag, or a basket on the floor. When the film broke, the operator was obliged to paw around in the tangle of film to find the right end. He was not always successful, an early exhibitor remembered, “when the reel was run off the next time, the last part would probably be upside-down, and the end came in the middle of the picture” (Lindsay, 1999, p.5).

A paint or plastered wall, a bed sheet or a large canvas served as the screen. In front of it, a “classy” store theatre had a small stage or platform used by the lecturer who interpreted the movies and by singers of “illustrated songs”. Illustrated songs were a variety show invention, but they usefully fill the interval between reels in a movie house. The ballad singer (or singers) was accompanied by a pianist. The pianist played an accompaniment for the movie, but in many cases this was simply whatever he felt like playing or knew by heart. A few houses in 1908 had a
three-piece orchestra consisting of a pianist, a violinist and a drummer (Russell, 1975).

The programme was changed every 15 to 30 minutes, and the patron was charged five cents though theatres with elaborate illustrated song presentations often levied a dime. These five-cent theatres, considered the province of the poor and uneducated, swarmed across the continent after 1905 and were largely concentrated in poorer shopping districts and slum areas. They were disdained, apparently as dens of vice by large sections of the population (Brownlow, 1968).

At a fairly early stage, some movie theatre entrepreneurs realized that the theatre itself could attract business. Many of these small storefront theatres, later called nickelodeons ("nickel" from the cost of admission and "odeon" from the Greek for theatre) had pretenses of grandeur and transformed the movie exhibition into big business. According to Moving Picture World, "Nickel madness is a term applied to the amazing popularity attained by the five-cent moving picture theatres" (Moving Picture World, 1907, p. 487).

The nickelodeon became the most famous of the early movie theatres because it made a great deal more money than any of its predecessors. The era of the nickelodeon represented a golden age for anyone willing to take a chance. The movie exhibition would never be the same again. With so many nickel store theatres open in October 1906 The Billboard of New York reported,

> No one is in a position to estimate the number of these exhibits which are now in operation, for an estimate today would be worthless tomorrow. In all big cities they seem to be on every business block (Pratt, 1966).

In 1904 there were a mere 25 nickel theatres, five years later in 1909 there were 8,000 nickelodeons across Canada and the United States. In 1907 Moving Picture World penned an editorial arguing that the "craze is on the wane. There are just too many theatres chasing too many nickels. Today there is cutthroat competition
between little nickelodeon owners, and they are beginning to compete each other out of existence" (Gomery, 1992, p.31). Nickelodeons were proving to be a very lucrative business. In 1909, nickelodeons were taking in $91 million annually. They were so popular, that the gross revenue of a single theatre week could be estimated by multiplying 3.5 - 4 cents by the population of the city (Valentine, 1994).

In 1909 Moving Picture World had predicted that nickelodeons would be soon part of the past, and movie theatres would take their place "seating five hundred to a thousand [patrons], most of them giving a mixed bill of vaudeville and motion pictures" (Gomery, 1992, p.32). The nickelodeon was a cramped, stuffy, uncomfortable and poorly-lit building where people went to while away half an hour. Nobody went there for a big night on the town. By 1911 the nickelodeon became obsolete. Moreover, the new theatres, designed as theatres and not made-over stores, were rising. The trend was toward the movie show as a "middle-class mass entertainment, held in spacious theatres and costing as much as twenty-five cents" (Gomery, 1992, p. 10).

Even the earliest movie theatres aspired to middle-class acceptance and money. In 1902, one of the earliest, if not (as is often claimed) the first regular commercial cinema opened in Los Angeles. In October of the same year Canada's first lasting movie house, the "Edison Electric Theatre," was opened by John A. Schuberg at 38 Cordova Street, Vancouver. One of its printed programmes for February 1903 announced that an usher was in attendance to see that ladies obtained desirable seats (McCallum, 1948).

In general between 1907 and 1910, moving pictures were neither sophisticated nor long enough to warrant exclusive surroundings. Nevertheless, between about 1907 and 1912 many exhibitors relentlessly pursued respectability and the "family trade" by dressing up their makeshift or newly built theatres and by paying some attention to the comfort and safety of the audience. At first, most of the attention was
concentrated on the building facade. One of the primary features was the addition of the box office. The box office was often ringed by electric lights flashing a multitude of colours, reminding passers-by that this was a modern, marvellous movie marvel, all in an age when most citizens did not have electricity in their homes (*Moving Picture World*, 1907, p. 140). Other artifices to entice the middle class included, "etched plate glass mirrors, tiled flooring, potted plants and artistically framed lithographs in the lobby area" (Russell, 1975, p. 25). In 1908 tip-up chairs with veneer seats and backs were introduced, and upholstered seats "were soon discovered to be cooler in the summer and perfectly comfortable for the comparatively short time patrons were seated. By 1910 the spring seat with fabric cover was standard for movie theatres" (Russell, 1975, p. 25-26). With the advent of aisle lighting in 1910 and properly dimmed and shaded auditorium lighting, interior decorations could be illuminated without interfering with the projection of the picture. Other features included sloped floors, balconies, waiting rooms, toilet facilities for staff and patrons and fire exits.

Among the theatres of the new improved type that were operating in Canada in 1911 was the Princess in Vancouver. Shortly after its opening, a *Moving Picture World* correspondent provided the following description of the *Princess* in Vancouver.

The front of the building follows in its general design the Romanesque style of architecture. Inside, it is modern in every respect. The auditorium is lighted by hundreds of softly colored incandescent lights, so arranged that there is no glare, the light being thrown against a mauve ceiling and reflected downward. The picture screen of white satin is placed back of the proscenium arch. The arch is fringed on the inner side by a beautiful decoration in art glass, through which the lights shine softly...The slope of the floor is so arranged that every person in the audience can see over a picture hat...On the right side of the auditorium, at the side of the stage, is a comfortable retiring room, with all modern accessories (*Moving Picture World*, 1911, p.1302).
By the end of the First World War, the time was right to build big theatres with thousands of seats. As everyone was falling in love with movies, it was time to build a proper show place for them. Theatre owners wanted to dazzle their customers with both the show and the building.

### 3.2.2 Palaces of the Night

A motion picture exhibition company had to offer an attractive building. The entertainment commenced with the building, which was a palace for the motion pictures. Everything about the movie palace was extravagant and overpowering. The movie palace was something unique. It is a perfect reflection of its times -- the daring, wild, imaginative decade of the 1920s. There could never be too much gilt, lacquer, paint, cut glass, mirrors, chandeliers, carvings or velvet. No show could be too elaborate or use too many stage effects. Throughout the 1920s fans marvelled at the triumphal arches overhead as they entered the theatre, the monumental staircases found in the typical lobby, and the ornate designs filling the sidewall of the auditorium (Valentine, 1994).

Even though many theatres seemed overpowering, they were also highly functional. Everyone had a perfect view of the screen. Acoustical planning ensured that the orchestral accompaniment to the silent films could be heard even in the furthest reaches of the balcony. Lighting played a key role throughout the performances. In general, the lights were kept low and the patrons kept their seats throughout the show. Too much light invited patrons to move about and that would have been chaotic with full houses of hundreds or thousands of patrons. Going to the movies was dignified and patrons responded accordingly (Gomery, 1992).

The movie palaces were built mainly between the years 1919 and 1929, before the Depression and before sound came to the movies. Although Canadian theatres never seemed to be as big or as fantastically decorated as the American movie
palaces, they were nonetheless quite large and beautiful. They were also, for the most part, built before the American theatres. For example, Shea's Hippodrome in Toronto, about 3,000 seats, was built in 1914 and was one of the largest vaudeville theatres in the world when it opened -- just about as large as theatres could be in those days before microphones.

The Ottawa Capitol, Vancouver Capitol, Pantages, Loews Uptown and Loews Montreal may not have had revolving elevated stages, nor could they pack 30,000 people into a single theatre in a single day (7 shows daily), but they did hold about 20,000 people in a day and produced terrific shows, and wonderful memories (Lindsay, 1999). This was the money making idea behind the concept of the movie palace. Fill the place. Entertain the masses.

### 3.2.3 Depression

More significant than the change in style was the economic reorganization of movie theatres in the 1930s, when they came under the control of corporations. In the latter half of the 1920s, the full integration of production, distribution and exhibition took place within the studio system. Thus, the major studios, the "Big Five", constituted an oligopoly of production and theatre ownership, controlling the structure and conduct of the industry through their numbers. The rest of the theatres were managed by smaller circuits or by a few independents who were unaffiliated with any circuit. The Big Five was thus able to dictate the terms of the marketplace for movie exhibition during the 1930s and 1940s, a trend that is still prevalent today. Immediately following this business consolidation, however, the nation entered the devastating economic downturn of the 1930s. The effects of the Depression reverberated throughout the motion picture industry. One by one, the studios entered hard economic times.
Theatres also underwent hard economic times. Average weekly attendance dropped from ninety million in 1930 to sixty million in 1932, and the number of theatres remaining in operation fell from nearly 22,000 to just over 14,000. Theatre owners tried a variety of come-ons and giveaways to stimulate attendance. Such lures as Bank Night, Bingo, and Dish Night promised either free gifts or the chance to win money or large items as an inducement to spend scarce Depression income at the movies (Gomery, 1992). Studios and theatre operators responded to the economic crisis with new marketing strategies. The studios produced escapist movies -- well-known screwball comedies, gangster films, and musicals of the era. And theatre owners introduced double features, or “duals,” with the intention of giving customers more for their money.

The studios could ill afford to spend money building or maintaining the movie palaces of the 1920s. Many patrons no longer willing to travel downtown to go to the movies went to the neighbourhood movie house instead. The move to the suburbs had begun with the nickelodeon around 1913-14. Russell Merritt credits that move from the dirty side streets in questionable big-city neighbourhoods to the main streets of bedroom communities with “establishing a national audience for the movies and paving the way for the movie palace” (Lindsay, 1999). Neighbourhood theatres marked the transition between the movie palaces of the 1920s and the neighbourhood house of the 1930s. Throughout the 1930s, owing to changes in aesthetic ideas as well as budgetary considerations, theatre designs became simpler, and by the end of the 1930s, the movie palace had been replaced by the next phase of movie theatre design - the neighbourhood house.8

The growth of theatre chains and the impact of the Depression on movie palaces were directly linked to the development of the neighbourhood movie house. The downtown palace gave birth to the neighbourhood theatre, which in the 1930s became simpler. Even the term “movie house” indicated a different vision of
attendance habits. Since the 1920s cinemas have been moving away from the city toward the suburbs. The first- and second-run system encouraged smaller, independent theatres near housing developments. Theatre-chain acquisitions of these theatres during the 1930s eliminated the competition with first-run houses in the city because the chain ended up owning all the theatres (Russell, 1974).

### 3.2.4 Drive-Ins

A more successful innovation during this period was the drive-in theatre, which was an attempt by the industry to unite people's growing love affair with their cars, with a new and exciting venue for watching motion pictures. Also, the shift in the population from the cities to the suburbs after the war also accounted for the popularity of drive-ins.

Drive-ins adapted themselves as much as possible to the needs of the postwar generation. Instead of hiring a babysitter, dressing up and driving into town, and hunting for a parking space (or paying to put the car in a parking lot), couples with young children took the kids along with them to the drive-in (usually at no extra cost) (Hoppenstand, 1998, p.230).

The drive-in craze peaked in the 1950s. However, the most important factor that lead to its demise was the fact that land at the edge of town in the 1950s became by the 1970s too valuable to remain the site of a drive-in. Suburbanisation continued unabated, and the acres required for a drive-in could be more profitably employed as space for a score of new homes and a shopping centre. Exhibitors looked for a long term and permanent response to suburbanisation. Ironically, they found it near their drive-in theatres.
3.3 A NEW STYLE OF ENTERTAINMENT

3.3.1 Shopping Centre Theatres

The first movie houses were primarily built downtown on transit lines. Outlying centres grew at the intersections of transportation lines, but these centres were not accessed by public transportation and surrounded by apartment buildings. Postwar suburbia was based on the automobile and the single-family dwelling. The mall-building movement commenced in the late 1960s and the idea of an enclosed place to shop and play became one of the defining icons of the 1970s (Gomery, 1992). Malls are among the most meticulously planned structures of the late twentieth century, brightly lit to promote a safe image, enclosed to keep out the elements, and convenient enough to the highway to make a car trip seemingly effortless. Here one-stop shopping was superior to what any aging downtown could offer (Falkner, 1977).

For the movie theatre in the shopping mall, the style that made movie palaces so attractive was abandoned and replaced with functionality. There was the necessary marquee outside to announce the films. The lobby consisted of a place to wait, a concession stand, and restrooms. The auditorium was a minimalist box with a screen at one end and seats in front (Gomery, 1992).

Many movie exhibitors began working with shopping centre developers to jam a half-dozen multiplexes of prefab, indistinguishable design into malls. With acres of free parking, and easy access by highways, the movies in the shopping centre grew to accommodate the majority of indoor screens and became the locus of Hollywood's attentions. It became realized that it was possible to operate half a dozen average indoor theatres of a few hundred seats each with one concession counter, one projectionist, and one manager who doubled as a ticket taker. Labour in the movie theatres had been reduced to low-cost, untrained servers and button pushers.
What movie patrons received for their entertainment dollar in the mall theatres, save locational centrality, proved as far from the golden days of the movie palace as one could imagine. Interior amenities, once taken for granted by film fans disappeared in the age of the multiplex. Waiting in the lobby of a movie palace was a wonderfilled experience. In the multiplex, lines often spilled out into the mall, getting tangled with shoppers. What space there was in the lobby was taken up by the concession stand.

By the late 1970s there were too many sticky floors from spilled drinks, too many noisy patrons, and too many films that seemed alike. Many pundits predicted the end of movie-going (Gomery, 1992). Critics claimed fans would go out on occasion to watch their favourites, but the burgeoning set of television channels that showed movies at home, and the availability of movies on video, would kill the theatrical movie show. This speculation of a stagnant theatre industry, with little growth and change because of television and other entertainment mediums, never came true. In fact, through the final quarter of the twentieth century there has been renewed interest and more change in the movie theatre business than any time since the age of the picture palace. There was a reaction to the prediction about the demise of the cinema experience, and during the 1980s theatres got better. They also grew in number, making more screens available than existed in the peak period of the 1940s.
3.4 MOVIEGOING IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

3.4.1 The Megaplex Phenomenon

The movie industry is now dominated by four major chains: United Artists Theatres (Famous Players in Canada), Lowes-Cineplex Odeon, AMC Entertainment Inc., and General Cinema - the Big Four, which control more than fourteen hundred screens each (Table 3.1).

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Famous Players</td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>916</td>
<td>124</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lowes-Cineplex Odeon</td>
<td>1904</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMC Entertainment</td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>2844</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Cinema</td>
<td>1922</td>
<td>1260</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Cinemark USA</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>2733</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3047</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Empire Theatres</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Landmark Cinemas</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 3.1: The total number of theatre screens by the Big Four (Source: *Boxoffice Magazine*, 2000).

* Cinemark USA was included as they are beginning their Canadian expansion.
** Companies that are only in Canada, were included to illustrate that there are some companies only in Canada that own a number of screens.

As we end the twentieth century, a crest in the construction of multiplexes is climaxing a thirty year growth phase. Theatre owners are seeking ways to differentiate their offerings from videotapes. More movie screens have been constructed in the 1980s and 1990s than anytime since the 1920s. This is so because consumers want easy access to the latest in first-run Hollywood product.
As entrepreneurs look to the future, change must always be considered. One of the biggest changes in the moviegoing industry is the establishment of huge megaplex entertainment complexes (Figure 3.2). These are vast complexes ranging from 12 to 32 screens. The theatre exhibitors are incorporating a number of innovative features in theatre construction. The auditoriums all have stadium seating with cupholder armrests. High-backed, "overstuffed" seats which rock gently have been installed, and row spacing has been increased to 117 centimetres to provide maximum leg room and accessibility. All of the auditoriums are equipped with digital stereo capabilities. State-of-the-art computer systems have been installed to speed ticket and concession sales, as well as control the temperature in the auditoriums. Banks of automated ticket machines line the entryway, allowing customers to pay by credit, or debit card, so there is little or no waiting in line. The screens are floor-to-ceiling, and many of the megaplexes are also equipped with an IMAX screen with large format 3D capability. Inside, the vast lobbies are a panoply of neon lighting and high-tech design with game arcades, and banks of brand-name food and beverage providers such as Pizza Hut, Starbucks, and Baskin & Robbins, to name a few.

Figure 3.2: Famous Players' version of a megaplex. The megaplexes are typically located near highways and appeal to a younger audience (Source: Lindsay, 1999).
In some ways, the megaplex is the exhibition industry's answer to the VCR. In the early 1990s, movie attendance basically remained flat in Canada: "Cocooning" was all the rage, people were staying home instead of going out, and they were renting movies instead of buying tickets to them. The point of the megaplex is to offer something different from the in-home entertainment option - and cheaper than other forms of out-of-home fun.

The megaplex was the next logical step for the movie industry to provide the finest out-of-the-home film entertainment in the ultimate theatrical environment. The megaplex theatres are movie palaces of the future, totally immersing today's audiences in the cinematic experience, and restoring for them the glamour, excitement and fun evoked by those buildings of the past.

The movie industry is creating movie theatres that are more than a place to see a movie, they are entertainment destinations. Entertainment centres have themed lobbies, interactive game centres and party rooms. They want the customers to come with their families and spend the entire afternoon or evening in the megaplex, have fun and enjoy the best in moviegoing entertainment.

3.5 THE FILM INDUSTRY TRANSFORMS

3.5.1 Sounding Good

With the advent of sound films in 1927 a new dimension was added to movie making. No single other technological innovation changed the way films were made and marketed more than did the use of sound in movies. The potential for sound movies was fully realized on 6 August 1926, with the release of *Don Juan*, which featured a pre-recorded musical score. With the premiere of the most famous early
sound motion picture, *The Jazz Singer*, on 5 October 1927, starring Al Jolson, it proclaimed in no uncertain terms, the advent of sound film, even though this movie only had a few scenes of dialogue (Figure 3.3). “Indeed, the popularity of this new technological advancement literally changed the film industry overnight, as other studios scrambled to produce their own talkies” (Hoppenstand 1998, p.226).

Despite the technical difficulties with the introduction of sound, like the restricting of movement of the camera’s manoeuverability and locking the screen image in standard shots not dissimilar to traditional theatrical stagings, audience demand, however, ensured that sound pictures became the standard of the industry. The arrival of sound occurred in the 1920s at precisely that point in time when something new and exciting was once again needed to stimulate movie attendance. While silents had reached their zenith of artistic achievement its product was relatively expensive now that it had to compete with the burgeoning mass medium of radio.

### 3.5.2 Television

In the early 1950s the cinemas had to compete with a new challenge - television. The great advantage that television had over motion pictures was that it offered “free” entertainment. Television offered audiences the same escapist fare that proved popular at the movie theatres: action, drama, comedy, and variety could all
be enjoyed at home, free of charge. "What television as a mass entertainment vehicle did was provide a far cheaper substitute for watching narratives composed of visual images and sounds" (Gomery, 1992, p.84). Television was not a perfect substitute, but it was cheaper.

North Americans fully embraced this new electronic medium with a passion that has not waned in over 40 years. The first Canadian TV station was CBFT Montreal, which went on the air 6 September 1952, followed by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). At the same time, movie attendance, which had risen almost continuously from the turn of the century, began to drop sharply. Through the 1950s, the same years which television first boomed, movie admissions in Canada fell from 650,000 a day to less than 300,000 (Lanken, 1993).

The film industry scrambled to find some new technology which would transform the movie-going experience -- to turn it into something that could only be found in a theatre. The industry challenged television in several crucial areas, such as exploiting the technological and production limitations of the television medium. Hollywood thought they could lure viewers back to the movie theatre by promoting the one great advantage that movies had over television at the time: size and quality of the picture being viewed. Several innovations such as 3-D or the wide screen movie (the film screen was basically a square, but Cinemascope nearly doubled the image's width) were tried, but were dropped after a few years by the movie industry as an unprofitable venture (Gomery, 1992).

The coming of television forever changed movie-going in North America. Before television, citizens supported their movie houses. Before television there were more Hollywood films unspooling at neighbourhood theatres than ever before. Hollywood would continue to explore new technologies and to exploit the weaknesses of television commercials, black and white, and a small screen.
3.5.3 Cable

When television began in the 1950s and 1960s, the number of stations was limited. Most of North America had three channels. Larger cities did have independent stations that could counter-program, but nowhere could an individual see the latest movie, except in a movie theatre. Movies were shown on television, but “television stations sanitized the presentations of theatrical films and cut them into prescribed time slots” (Liss, 1996, p.204). The emergence of cable television, principally through its pay channels, would take advantage of the frustrations of millions of North Americans who watched most of their movies on television.

Cable television came in two versions: basic (one fee per month for a series of channels) and premium (a special monthly fee for one separate channel, showing uncut, uncensored feature films). Presently, nearly three-quarters of all households pay cable companies to deliver their TV signals and receive in return a choice of up to 60 domestic and foreign services (Liss, 1996). The cable industry has grown and thrived because it delivers a variety of channels, including uncut movies. However, during the 1980s cable television ceased to be the only show in town; a revolution in watching movies at home took place; home video would transform movie watching as nothing had since the introduction of the movie show itself.

3.5.4 The Video Age

The video cassette recorder (VCR) was the first TV peripheral device to gain widespread acceptance. The VCR was the most important transformation in movie watching in the second half of the twentieth century. Home video enables the movie fan to program his or her own theatre. No one is dependent on the desires of a theatre owner. In the convenience of one’s own home, a movie fan can choose from thousands of the best films ever made. With such freedom, (and falling equipment
prices), the VCR stimulated movie watching to new heights during the 1980s (Attallah, 1996).

Home video combines the best of the box-office approach of movie economics and the convenience of television watching at home. Home video is geared to the desires of the individual movie fan. By the late 1980s movies could be rented anywhere from convenience stores, gas stations, country stores and even dry cleaners. It became evident that tape viewing requires a well-stocked video store nearby. Here location matters, so important to movie watching since its beginnings with the nickelodeon craze of 1905. Video stores stocked with thousands of titles appeared on corners in all neighbourhoods. In the early 1980s, it took Oscar-winning pictures years to make it to the shelves of a video store, the window of release by the early 1990s had been reduced to months (Attallah, 1996).

In the late 1980s came the selling of the movie to the consumer. The ultimate test in the development of mass sales of home video came in 1988 during the sale of E.T. The sale of E.T. was so successful, that in the 1990s the market for purchasing movies on video increased with consumers wanting to build a “library” of their favourites.

What does the future of the technology hold for home video? The latest technological innovation for the home is DVD (digital video disc). DVD's can store enough data for up to nine hours of studio-quality movies. As a movie medium, DVD has many advantages over today's VHS tape. One of the primary advantages is quality. The movie from a DVD provides a sharp and clear picture with excellent colour. DVD is to the VHS tape what audio CD was to the long-playing record. Consumers were motivated to switch from LP to audio CD by the superior sound quality and durability of the new medium. DVD offers a similar increase in quality and durability for video (Attallah, 1996).
For now and into the foreseeable future, the preferred choice for watching movies at home will be the video cassette recorder. Watching a film on video is surely convenient and cheap, but the theatrical experience remains the purer aesthetic form.

3.6 MOVIE GOING IN VANCOUVER

Throughout the entire history of motion pictures, the citizens of Greater Vancouver have always loved attending the movies. Hastings Street from the 100-block west to the 300-block east, was Vancouver's finest prominent theatre district in the 1910s and 1920s, originally called the "great white way." By the 1930s vaudeville and various other live entertainments that had supported the eight theatres along the street had all but disappeared. The most beautiful theatre ever built in Vancouver, was the Pantages Theatre at 20 West Hastings, which carried on under new owners and a new name, the Beacon, with vaudeville and second-run movies. Other important theatres on Hastings such as the Rex and Columbia soldiered on as best as they could during the Great Depression. The fortunes of Hastings Street continued to decline however, and by the mid-1930s the main theatre district of Vancouver was definitely considered to be Granville Street.

Figure 3.4: In 1949 Granville Street was aptly named theatre row. All the flashy neon signs added pizzazz to theatre row (Source: Lindsay, 1999).
Granville Street was aptly named “theatre row” (Figure 3.4). In its heyday the street boasted ten theatres within a five block radius (Davis, 1997). In addition to being the home of two grand movie palaces, the Capitol and the Orpheum, Granville Street also offered the Colonial, the Lyric (the former Vancouver Opera House), the Paradise (later remodelled as the Coronet), the Studio (now the Paradise), the Plaza, the Vogue, the Dominion (now the Caprice) and the Strand (at the corner of Georgia and Seymour). The street was awash in brilliant neon and lineups often stretched to the end of the block.

Unlike the Pantages and Orpheum theatres (Figure 3.5) which were built to house vaudeville and live theatre, the Capitol Theatre at 820 Granville was a pure movie palace. Opened in the silent movie era in 1921, it was a lush facility that originally seated 2,500. Like the Orpheum, the Capitol was equipped with a huge Wurlitzer organ to accompany the movies. The Capitol also had the privilege of premiering Vancouver’s first talking picture, *Mother Knows Best*, on 18 October 1928. Today, the theatre is a multiplex, known as the Capitol 6.

The Vogue, the Odeon theatre chain’s “prestige” movie house on Granville, was opened in 1941 as competition for the Capitol and Orpheum, both operated by Famous Players. The Vogue was very eye-catching, becoming the first Canadian theatre to win a “Perfect 36” award for the

**Figure 3.5**: Shown here in its vaudeville days, the Vancouver Orpheum was the largest and finest theatre belonging to the Orpheum circuit in Canada. (Source: Lindsay, 1999).
architectural merit from the *Annual Theatre Catalogue* of the United States (Ackery, 1980).

While the Downtown theatres received the first-run movies and the largest audiences, neighbourhood theatres were an essential component of the movie-going experience for most of Greater Vancouver from the 1930s to 1950s. In the era before television, these theatres had a large, regular base of patrons who lived nearby and enjoyed everything from weekend children’s matinees to Saturday night double-features. Of the dozens of neighbourhood theatres that existed in Greater Vancouver, most are gone now, having been demolished or converted to other uses. Some departed old favourites include the Windsor, the Rio, the Cambie, the Kerrisdale, the Alma, the Kitsilano, the Grandview, the Fraser, the Circle, the Star and the Roxy theatres (Figure 3.6).

Despite the loss of some fine theatres some have survived these many years and indeed come back to flourish. The classy old Stanley Theatre on Granville has come back to life as a live theatre, while the Hollywood, the Ridge, the Park, the Dunbar and Varsity theatres continue to remain popular fixtures in their neighbourhoods.

In the 1930s general attendance at movie theatres, especially the palaces like the Capitol and the Orpheum, dropped off due to the Great Depression. Theatres held on

**Figure 3.6:** The Kerrisdale Theatre, just west of the Boulevard on 41st Avenue, in 1930 (Source: Kluckner, 1984).
during these times by offering double- and triple-features and by running audience-building promotions such as "Foto-Nite" and kitchenware giveaways. World War II not only cured the economy, it brought customers back to the theatres in droves. The time between 1940 and 1946 was the most lucrative era in Vancouver movie theatre history. Citizens packed Downtown theatres to participate in the war effort. Newsreels offered the latest news of the war, while war bond drives were held by the theatres on a regular basis. The renewed boom times for local theatre owners did not last much longer however.

In the late 1940s a rapid decline in movie attendance was felt and unlike previous drops in attendance, this one was permanent. The public would never again return to the movie theatres in the numbers experienced before the end of World War II. First of all the flight to the suburbs by returning veterans had a devastating impact on Vancouver's urban theatres. There were simply fewer and fewer people living in the city to attend the theatres. Across Canada nearly 50 percent of the theatres being used in 1948 were out of service by 1970. The second and biggest blow to movie going in Vancouver was the introduction of the television. Money that used to be spent going to the movies every week was now being diverted towards the purchase of a television set where "free" entertainment was now available.

Greater Vancouver lost over two dozen theatres during the 1950s including many neighbourhood theatres. Almost no new theatres were built in the 1950s, the only notable exception being the Ridge Theatre on Arbutus. Theatres were again being built in the 1960s, but not in Vancouver.

Theatre chains followed the population to the suburbs and multi-screen cinemas were constructed in malls everywhere throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Parking was free and plentiful, and the suburbs were considered "safer" than the city. Dwindling patronage, rising land values and a lack of heritage protection led to the loss of several of the best theatres in Vancouver between 1967 and 1975, including
the old Pantages (Majestic) Theatre (which remains a parking lot to this day) on West Hastings, the Strand on Georgia and Seymour (the Scotia Tower site), the Capitol on Granville (now the Capitol 6), and very nearly the Orpheum (Davis, 1997).

More competition arose for the theatre industry during the early 1980s as the introduction of home video again took business from theatres. By this time the Downtown theatre business was dominated by multiplexes, the largest including the Capitol 6, the Granville 7, and the Royal Centre (ten small theatres). With the exception of the Royal Centre, the theatres have held on and there has been a revitalization of neighbourhood theatres by individuals such as Leonard Schein (the Park and Fifth Avenue Cinemas), Ray Mainland (the Ridge), and Ken Charko (the Dunbar and the Varsity) and David Fairleigh (the Hollywood). The dedicated film enthusiasts also have the Pacific Cinematheque on Howe Street to serve their needs.

Recently, Vancouver has seen a rapid expansion in the number of megaplexes in the suburbs of Vancouver. Six giant multi-screen state-of-the-art complexes have been built in the suburbs in the last two-and-a-half years, and several more are in the planning stages. All of the megaplexes have been in the suburbs of Vancouver (Richmond, Langley, Coquitlam and Burnaby) encouraging Vancouver residents to get in their cars and drive to see a movie. All of the suburban behemoths have dimmed the bright lights of Theatre Row, but downtown Vancouver will no longer be left in the dark. Downtown Vancouver is striking back with some of the flashiest megaplexes of all. A megaplex entertainment centre will be built at the corner of Burrard and Smithe, Paramount Place. Paramount Place will be a 13-storey tower that will have 16 state-of-the-art theatres, along with an IMAX cinema, a bowling alley, a climbing wall, an ice rink, and of course, retail space. Another megaplex, International Village, opened in November 1999, near BC Place and GM Place. International Village has 12 theatres, restaurants, public market, “international
fashion never before seen in Vancouver," and a residential tower. Other megaplexes for Vancouver are in the works - a 12 screen complex may go into the empty lot in the 700-block of Granville at Robson, across from Eaton's. When all is said and done in 2001 Vancouver will have 41 new movie screens (8,500 seats) downtown.

3.7 SAVED FROM THE WRECKING BALL

Vancouverites have always loved attending the movies. The citizens of Vancouver have stepped in twice to save two local, prominent movie theatres from the wrecking ball, the Orpheum in 1977 and 20 years later and most recently, the Stanley in 1997.

3.7.1 The Orpheum Theatre

The Orpheum is Vancouver's only surviving movie palace from the 1920s. Originally opened on 8 November 1927, as a vaudeville house, the Orpheum was the largest and most opulent theatre on the Pacific Coast. The grand old theatre was host to a who's who of legendary performers as well as memorable movie premieres, including Gone with the Wind on 16 February 1940.

When the Vancouver Community Arts Council was preparing an inventory of the city's historical buildings, Famous Players' plans were uncovered. The plans were for the Orpheum to be carved up into several smaller auditoriums. According to Famous Players', "the move is an economic move, and not an uncommon one in the theatre business at this time, as the movie industry fights for survival and progress" (Ackery, 1980, p.245). When the plans for the theatre reached the public, Vancouver City Hall was inundated with "8,000 letters from citizens, with only ten of them in favour of destruction. The others were shocked, angry, pleading" (Ackery, 1980, p.244). Never before had City Hall had such an overwhelming reaction to the impending loss of an old building.
A special City Council committee on the Orpheum was set up when it was determined that Vancouver was in need of a second civic theatre (Queen Elizabeth Theatre was the first, built in 1959). Numerous sources of funding were sought — the federal government, provincial government, citizen donations, benefit concerts — however, there was a shortage of funds for meeting the deadline set by Famous Players. On 19 March 1974, the day before the deadline, City Council voted to buy the theatre for $3.9 million and undertake a complete restoration of the theatre’s interior the day after the final curtain on the Orpheum Theatre’s last picture show. Once the City decided to buy the theatre, the federal government, provincial government and numerous other sources of funding became available (Davis, 1997).

On 22 April 1977, Vancouver’s grand old lady, beautifully rejuvenated, “proudly began a new stage in her career” (Ackery, 1980, p. 249). The Orpheum became the permanent home of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and a restored concert hall that hosts a variety of pop, classical, choral and chamber recitals, as well as being an ideal venue for concert recordings, conference sessions and seminars. Today the Orpheum is one of Vancouver’s most popular theatres attended by thousands of people each year and was one of the first major theatres in Canada to be rescued.

3.7.2 Stanley Theatre

"During the 1991 provincial election there seemed to be only one issue that candidates from all three major parties agreed on -- the Stanley must be saved" (Davis, 1997, p.718).

Another theatre owned by Famous Players shut its doors in 1990 (Figure 3.7). Opened in 1930, with the showing of *One Romantic Night*, the Stanley was built, but never used for vaudeville, instead it became a movie house. In 1932 adults paid 40 cents, or 25 cents at matinees; children were in the door for as little as a dime. According to one long time viewer at the Stanley:
That dime, that precious 10 cents, clutched in a grimy little fist, bought us three hours of heavenly escape in the middle of the Depression. We got a cartoon, a serial, a news reel, the feature film and coming attractions. We knew there was a balcony up there, but we felt if we sat that far back, we weren’t getting our money’s worth so we tried to sit in the first five rows, necks craned, and usually went home with a cracking headache. But it was worth it, to swing through the trees with Tarzan, to bring in the Bad Man From Red Butte with Johnny Mack Brown (Wood, 1998, p. 30).

Figure 3.7: The Stanley Theatre has recently reopened as a live theatre after showing movies for 60 years (Source: Lindsay, 1999).

The Stanley “is where three generations of Vancouverites took first dates on a Saturday night and watched the cinematic epics of the 1950s and ‘60s in wide screen Technicolor splendour” (Wood, 1998, p.30). The Stanley operated as a neighbourhood theatre until 1941 when it was sold to Famous Players for $268,000. For 60 years the landmark cinema showed the best that Hollywood had to offer. In the years that followed, television and the rest of the home entertainment expansion took their toll, and in 1991, Famous Players closed the theatre with Fantasia and slapped a $4.5 million price tag on the building (later reduced to $3.5 million). Thousands signed a petition to save the Stanley. The issue went to city hall.
Without this effort, the building was to have been gutted for a shopping centre, or even completely demolished. For four years the Stanley Theatre sat empty waiting for a buyer (Wood, 1998).

In 1994 the Stanley Theatre Society (formed by the Arts Club and Vancouver TheatreSports) leased the theatre, and spear-headed a fund-raising campaign. They wanted to renovate the 1,250 seat Depression-era Stanley to make it the Art’s Club main stage. From the moment the Stanley Theatre Society leased the building there was always the “threat that funding for the revitalization project wouldn’t materialize, leaving it to developers to gut the theatre for retail space. A Gap store was a distinct possibility even after the Stanley Theatre Society began leasing the property” (Birini, 1998, p. D1). Once again the citizens of Vancouver and the City of Vancouver stepped in to save the theatre. Forty-eight hours before the project shelving deadline the Stanley Theatre Society received a $2 million loan from two local “theatre buffs,” which was enough to guarantee a go-ahead for the project. “We came within 48 hours of abandoning the project. In a conference call with the board it was clear that we couldn’t get the money to buy the theatre, and so we also couldn’t get equivalent government funding” (Birnie, 1998, p.D1). Furthermore, support from Vancouver City Council was crucial because both the federal and provincial governments had pledged support, but if the Stanley Theatre Society “did not get the support from the city, our boards will vote against the project. We were not prepared to jeopardize our societies [Arts Club and Vancouver TheatreSports]” (Bula, 1997, p.B3). On 5 January 1995, after two hours of presentations, questions, and arguments by the Stanley Theatre Society with Vancouver city council, city councillors agreed to give the Stanley’s buyers 44,000 square feet of air rights, 15,200 square feet more than the zoning would normally allow. Wall Financial Corp paid $1.2 million to transfer the 44,000 square feet of density to its new tower at Hornby and Nelson.
Businesses in the area were excited at the prospect of having the Stanley back. After the Stanley closed in 1991 long time business owners along Granville noticed “a drop in business after the Stanley closed as a movie house. People stopped browsing before seeing a movie” (Birnie, 1998, p.D1). “You save a theatre, you save three blocks” (Murray, 1991, p.D2).

Following support from the City of Vancouver, the Stanley Theatre Society received support from both the federal and provincial governments, plus sponsorship, donations and fund-raising. In 1997, of the $8.5 million required, $6.2 million had been raised. On 28 October 1998 the neon marquee was relit and the Stanley re-opened with the big-band musical Swing.

The Stanley already has a history, a sense of people going there to see things, albeit a cinema. To bring that back to life and enhance it by turning it into a venue for live theatre, is quite thrilling. You know people have passed through the doors and you know somewhere in the walls are all those people, that for 60 years made this theatre come alive. You can’t replace that (Inwood, 1998, p.B1).

Thanks to the successful campaigns to ward off the wrecking ball, two of Canada’s most beautiful theatres have been restored to their former glory, recalling the days when the cinema was young and going to the movies was a magical event. The Orpheum and the Stanley Theatres are just two examples where citizens and all levels of government have ensured that cinematic heritage survives.

3.8 SUMMARY

There was no place like it. With its towering marquees, majestic lobbies and magnificent auditoriums, the North American movie palace was right out of a fantasy, transporting moviegoers to the exotic worlds of cinema.

The movie industry has survived many upheavals. The first was the introduction of sound to movies. Even the most profitable theatres nearly collapsed when sound came in. When the Depression hit, movies suffered along with any other business.
The few postwar theatres that were constructed were unadorned and completely unlike the movie palaces of the 1920s. The *Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute* of Canada in 1947 decreed that “any new movie theatres that were built had to be as plain as cardboard. Theatres should not look like a giant jukebox.” And so it was. By 1960, there was no longer a pretense of imaginativeness; plainness was the order of the era. This devotion to non-decoration also affected the old theatres. Modernization meant painting over the delicate decorative schemes of an earlier age.

Working hand-in-hand with this anti-ornateness was the crisis wrought by television. The little screen had crept in and stolen the movies’ thunder. There was a less-than promising future. Hollywood’s early counter-attack of gimmicks and giant screens had some success. But retreat was inevitable - and soon noticeable - the familiar package of features, short subjects, newsreel and cartoons were replaced by a feature-and- that's-it (save, maybe, for previews and, in some theatres by the late 1980s, commercials). The notion of the movie house as a dream palace passed on.

The deterioration of big city cores encouraged theatre owners to build their cinemas in the suburban malls for financial reasons - it is where their audiences were. In many cities, people were too frightened to come downtown to see a movie. It seemed the movie palace was doomed. The lovely palaces with thousands of seats could not afford to contract for the weak movies, nor could it afford to rent a good movie when some distribution companies based the rental price of the film on the number of seats in the house.

There were too many movie theatres for film audiences, and the 1970s and 1980s saw the loss of many fine theatres throughout Canada and the United States. Only a handful of old-style movie theatres survive today, just one or two in anything like the original condition. For most, real estate value surpassed perceived box-office
worth. Social, architectural and historical values were not considered, and intact alternate use was not explored.

Going to the movies was a major leisure activity and art form which was central to so many people's experiences. To dismiss movie theatre architecture as trivial is to deny the economic and social reality of one of North America’s largest industries and the role of mass entertainment in urban life. The motion picture theatre served as a significant experience for millions of people.

Enter the dream-house, brothers and sisters, leaving
Your debts asleep, your history at the door:
This is the home for heroes, and this loving
Darkness a fur you can afford.
(O'Brien and Eyles, 1993).
CHAPTER 4 - HOLLYWOOD THEATRE CASE STUDY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides background information on the Kitsilano community and the Hollywood Theatres. The study of the Hollywood Theatre, one of Vancouver’s few remaining independent movie theatres, was intended to highlight whether movie theatres enhance a community’s character, identity and sense of stability.

4.2 THE NEIGHBOURHOOD -- KITSILANO

Neighbourhood boundaries are often difficult to define. Kitsilano, one of Vancouver’s 23 neighbourhoods, is a popular neighbourhood located on the west side of Vancouver. Kitsilano stretches from the English Bay waterfront to 16th Avenue, and from Burrard to Alma Streets.

Kitsilano was originally settled by Coast Salish natives living in a village called Sun’ahk, facing north into False Creek near the Kitsilano side of the Burrard Bridge. In 1869 the Coast Salish people had been granted a tiny reservation around the village, bounded roughly by First Avenue, Chestnut and the Burrard Bridge right-of-way. Eight years later the land grant was doubled to include part of Kitsilano Point, however in 1901 the Provincial Government decided to displace the native community, some members went to Squamish, some to the Capilano reserve. A decade later the reservation was abandoned and considered to be a future industrial reserve. In 1905 the area was named after Chief Khahtsahlanough, whose grandson August Jack was a resident of Sun’ahk.

Since it was first settled around the turn of the 20th century, Kitsilano has been home to a very diverse cross-section of Vancouver’s population. Throughout its history, the homes of the wealthy have stood next to rental apartments, and workers’ cottages occupied streets near popular bathing beaches. In the early days, the two
factors which created this diversity were the pretty English Bay waterfront on the one hand and industrial False Creek on the other. Since the 1970s, Kitsilano's proximity to the white-collar jobs of downtown Vancouver has boosted prices on both the surviving cottages and the mansions.

By the time Kitsilano was named in 1905, a small community was flourishing on Fourth Avenue, centred around Yew Street. The major drawbacks to settlement were the great distance to the nearest streetcar stop (3rd and Granville), and the steep hills, which were muddy and difficult to negotiate with horse and wagon.

To spur development in Kitsilano, the CPR developed Kitsilano in 1909. The CPR took advantage of the cheap land available west of Trafalgar to build the first apartments in Vancouver. Another streetcar line extending from Granville Bridge along 4th Avenue to Alma, was completed in 1909, opening up more land. More and more houses went up between 4th and 9th (named Broadway in 1912). The CPR (which owned most of the land east of Trafalgar), the BC Electric Railway's streetcar line along 4th Avenue to Alma, and the Burrard Bridge built in 1932, all played a role in opening up Kitsilano. Kitsilano was not fully developed south to 16th Avenue until the late 1940s.

Transit was very important to Kitsilano. In 1952, the local streetcar service was replaced by trolley buses in BC Electric's "rail to rubber" campaign. Today, under the auspices of Translink, the trolley buses continue with the #9, #10 and numerous diesel buses, such as the #99 B-Line on Broadway, #4 on West Fourth Avenue, and the #2 and #22 running north/south along McDonald. The area is not serviced by any other forms of transit, however, it has been discussed about an elevated sky-train, linking other sky-trains with the UBC campus.

Kitsilano has a number of community landmarks, including the tiny Arbutus Grocery at the corner of 6th Avenue and Arbutus Street. The building has a boomtown
facade and an unusual corner entry. It was built in 1907 by Thomas F. Frazer and is one of the finest old grocery stores in the city. Other community landmarks in Kitsilano are two of Vancouver’s few remaining independent cinemas: the Ridge Theatre on Arbutus and the Hollywood Theatre on Broadway. The Vancouver Film Festival originated at the Ridge, which opened in 1950, and plays alternate art and foreign films year round; the Hollywood, which opened in 1935, still runs double bills.

4.3 HOLLYWOOD THEATRE

For most people, the word “Hollywood” signifies more than a Southern California city - it conjures up images of glamorous movie stars, extravagant lifestyles, and all the excitement and magic of the movie capital of the world. However, when the residents of Kitsilano think of the Hollywood they think of the Hollywood Theatre (Figure 4.1). The Hollywood Theatre, 64 years old, and the longest continuously-run family theatre in Canadian history, opened on 24 October 1935. The founder of the theatre, Reginald Fairleigh, was a pioneer in Vancouver’s exhibition industry. Mr. Fairleigh’s first foray into the business was as the owner of one of Vancouver’s earliest cinemas, the Progress Theatre, which he ran from 1914 to 1918, during the era of

Figure 4.1: Hollywood Theatre, has been open for business since 1935 (Source: Author, 1999).
silent films. The idea of building the Hollywood Theatre came from Reginald’s wife Margaret, who wanted a theatre built for the family. Reginald Fairleigh’s son, David I,\(^{10}\) took over the management of the Hollywood Theatre in 1946 and was there until his death in December 1998. Mr. Fairleigh’s eldest son, David II took over the management of the theatre when his father passed away. The theatre is now owned by David II, Gloria (daughter to Mr. Fairleigh), and Richard (son of Reginald and Margaret) who runs the concession stand. David II’s sons, Vincent, Brandon, and Jeff, all work at the theatre, either in the projection booth, or as the doorman, and Gloria’s son Gregory also works at the theatre.

Reginald passed his interest in the movie business onto Mr. Fairleigh, who thanks to his father’s profession, had become very knowledgeable about early theatre technology and the exhibition industry. Looking back on his start in exhibition, Mr. Fairleigh once commented, “Once I got into it I put my heart and soul into it. It is my life” (Personal Communication, 1998).

The Hollywood Theatre opened at the height of the Great Depression. The Art Deco style theatre, which cost $50,000 to build, was named the Hollywood Theatre, to evoke the glory of the movie industry. Opening day was a big event, with the double bill of Will Rogers, *Life Begins at 40*, and *Lightning Strikes Twice* featuring Thelma Todd.

One of the biggest challenges the Hollywood Theatre faced was surviving the advent of the television. Mr. Fairleigh commented,

> One of the occasions I remember very well was when TV came in during the 50s, and all the chain theatres around us closed. We were the only ones still there - about 15 to 20 theatres [in our area] closed. Everybody was staying home watching TV. We never closed one day, except when they didn’t have Sunday showings in BC [due to a national Canadian law that has since been repealed]. Since the 1970s we’ve been open seven days a week (Personal Communication, 1998).
The next biggest change Mr. Fairleigh saw take place in the exhibition industry is the widespread availability of video, which has been both a friend and a foe. “When it first came in we kind of had a rough time, but it made people more aware of the pictures. If it weren’t for video, there would be a theatre on every corner. It’s enabled us to stick around longer.” On the other hand, Mr. Fairleigh expressed some concern over the recent trend of studios’ releasing movies straight to video, feeling that this “makes the video market stronger. [Theatrically released] films should take precedence over videos” (Personal Communication, 1998).

The trend in the movie industry in the 1980s and 1990s was to divide single screen theatres into two or three smaller screens. Putting in two screens would be detrimental to the Hollywood Theatre. “We would have postage-stamp sized screens. That’s one of the advantages of having a single theatre - it has a proper-size screen. Inside a lot of these multi-theatres, its like a shoebox. Today’s trend is to have as many screens as possible. After 63 years, I am happy to continue with one” (Personal Communication, 1998).

Keeping the prices low has kept patrons loyal to the Hollywood Theatre: a double bill is just $4.50 with the exception of Monday’s when the price drops to $3.00. Located near UBC, and in a trendy neighbourhood, the Hollywood Theatre caters to adult and university-age patrons.

The Hollywood Theatre, like the few other surviving independents, has faced more challenges than ever before with video rentals, cable, pay TV, buy outs by major exhibition companies and the spread of megaplex theatres taking their share of the movie viewing market. However, the Hollywood Theatre has remained a prominent focus in Kitsilano since 1935 and that does not seem about to change. What has changed are the businesses neighbouring the Hollywood. A story from the old News Herald (Appendix A) at the time of the theatre’s opening ran with congratulatory ads from local businesses - none of which are around today.
CHAPTER 5 - METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Building on the literature review of complete communities and cultural policies, and the significance that movie theatres have had in people’s lives, this chapter outlines the development of a research framework for assessing whether movie theatres as a cultural resource contribute to a community. This chapter also provides the results of a survey involving the patrons of the Hollywood Theatre. As one of Vancouver’s oldest movie theatres, the Hollywood Theatre provides an excellent opportunity to determine how a movie theatre as a cultural resource contributes to the community.

5.2 SURVEY

Based upon the literature review of complete communities, the arguments used for cultural resources and the influence that movie theatres have had, a survey was designed to determine how a cultural resource, such as a movie theatre, contributes to the community.

The survey was divided into two parts (Appendix B). In Part A, patrons of the Hollywood Theatre were asked to measure the weight of 11 survey items with possibilities ranging from (1) not important to (5) very important or (1) strongly agree to (5) strongly disagree, with respect to each item’s value as a contribution to their value of the Hollywood Theatre as a cultural resource. Close-ended questions were primarily asked because they are easier on the respondent as they require less effort and less facility with words (Babbie, 1990). Also included in Part A was one open-ended question.

Part B was an open-ended survey item which allowed respondents to describe any other factors that contribute to their feelings on why the Hollywood Theatre is important to the community. An open-ended question was asked because they
provide a great advantage because the respondent has freedom in answering (Babbie, 1990). Frequently, the researcher’s understanding of the topic is clarified and even completely changed by unexpected responses to open questions.

The survey attempts to determine the importance of the Hollywood Theatre as a cultural resource to the community. Cultural resources may be recognized as important, but a lack of understanding of how these resources affect a community is not known. The survey addresses the arguments outlined in Chapter 2, in an environmental, economic and social context.

The author administered the survey to 60 patrons of the Hollywood Theatre. Every 10th patron, over the age of 18 was asked to participate in the survey. If the 10th patron was under the age of 18, then the next patron over the age of 18 was asked to participate. Furthermore, if the patron declined to participate, the next patron over the age of 18 was asked to participate. The survey was administered on a Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Wednesday night, during a run of the same movies in July 1999. A pretest of the survey (10 patrons) was completed prior to being administered as a means of catching and solving unforeseen problems in the administration of the survey, such as the phrasing and sequence of questions or its length. The pretest was also used to indicate the need for additional questions or the elimination of others.

All patrons who agreed to participate were assured that the information they provided would be confidential, and no individual theatre patron would be identified. This was possible because no names and other personal information were asked on the survey. Their answers were to be combined with those of others and used only for analysis. The survey was designed so that it could be completed very quickly and easily, within 5 to 7 minutes.
5.2.1 Sample

The sample consisted entirely of patrons of the Hollywood Theatre. It is important to note that the sample was not a random one, it exhibits a bias towards the patrons (users) of the Hollywood Theatre. Therefore, the sample represents the views and opinions only of users of the Hollywood Theatre, and not the larger community. Although the data is presented, the reader is reminded that this was an exploratory study. The sample was not large enough to draw statistically valid conclusions. However, the results do provide a flavour of the issues and a series of the attitudes of the patrons about the Hollywood Theatre as a cultural resource.

5.2.2 Questions

The survey asked respondents to indicate how important each point was to defining their personal identity with the neighbourhood theatre. Respondents indicated their views on topics such as whether the Hollywood Theatre contributes to the aesthetics of the neighbourhood, invokes a sense of pride, makes the community a more desirable place to live, contributes to the diversity of goods and services, the conservation of heritage buildings, the retail vitality, and the contribution to cinematic heritage. Finally, respondents were asked to identify additional characteristics which were not mentioned in Part A that contribute to their feelings on why the Hollywood Theatre is important in their neighbourhood.
5.3 RESULTS

5.3.1 Sample Demographics

Approximately an equal number of males and females were surveyed for this research, 46.7 percent and 53.3 percent, respectively. It should be noted that all respondents were over the age of 18 years. The majority of the respondents (80 percent) to the survey were residents of Kitsilano. Approximately, 15 percent of the respondents came from neighbouring communities such as Point Grey, Kerrisdale and Dunbar. The remaining 5 percent of the respondents came from distant communities such as North Vancouver, Strathcona and University Endowment Lands (UEL). Of the Kitsilano residents which were surveyed approximately 80 percent of them have lived in the Kitsilano area for at least one year (Figure 5.1). It is interesting to note that the average length of residence for respondents in the last category (11 or more years) was approximately 28 years.

![Number of years lived in Kitsilano](image)

**Figure 5.1:** The length of time respondents have lived in Kitsilano.
Furthermore, 73 percent of the respondents to the survey indicated that they used an alternative mode of transportation (cycling, walking, or transit) to arrive at the Hollywood Theatre on the evening surveyed (Figure 5.2). This result suggests, that having a cultural resource within the community allows residents to be less dependent on the automobile, thereby contributing to the a healthy environment.

![Bar chart showing modes of transportation]

**Figure 5.2:** The percentage of respondents and their modes of transportation to the Hollywood Theatre.
5.3.2 Part A

5.3.2.1 Social

In an attempt to better understand the social role the Hollywood Theatre may play in the Kitsilano community, patrons were asked questions to indicate the value they place on the Hollywood Theatre as a venue of leisure.

When asked to rate the importance of the Hollywood Theatre as a venue of leisure and entertainment on a scale of 1 through 5, (1 = not important, 5 = very important) more than 90 percent of the respondents gave the Hollywood Theatre a rating of 4 or 5 (Figure 5.3). This lends support to the notion that the Hollywood Theatre may

![Graph showing the percentage of ratings for the Hollywood Theatre as a venue for leisure and entertainment.](image)

**Figure 5.3:** The importance of the Hollywood as a venue for leisure and entertainment.
play an important social role in the community. The importance of the Hollywood Theatre as a venue of leisure and entertainment is further strengthened by the number of times the respondents visit the theatre per month (Figure 5.4). Approximately 50 percent of the respondents visit the Hollywood Theatre on a weekly basis.

![Bar chart showing number of visits to Hollywood Theatre per month.](image)

*Figure 5.4: Number of times patrons visit the Hollywood Theatre per month.*

Table 5.1 was created to examine whether there is a relationship between length of residency and the average attendance at the Hollywood Theatre. Generally speaking, the average attendance rate (visits/month) seems to increase as the length of residency increases. The data in Table 5.1 suggests that long term residents of Kitsilano may place a greater importance or value on the Hollywood Theatre (as seen by the number of visits) as a venue of leisure than residents which have recently moved to the community (less than 6 months).
Table 5.1: Average attendance to the Hollywood Theatre per month sorted by residence status and duration.

Ever since the motion picture business began, people have been going to see movies as a source of entertainment. To support the argument that movie theatres represent an important social venue respondents were asked, How many people are attending tonight's movie with you, including yourself?. Figure 5.5 illustrates that 73.3 percent of the respondents attended the Hollywood Theatre, with more than one person. These results suggest that going to the Hollywood Theatre may be considered a social event.

![Chart showing percentage of respondents by number of people attending a movie.](chart.png)

**Figure 5.5:** Respondent’s party size (including the respondent).
According to the arguments presented in Chapter 2 cultural resources can foster a sense of place among community residents by offering a place for the public to gather and share experiences. To this end, the author asked respondents to comment on their level agreement with the following statement: *Neighbourhood theatres, like the Hollywood Theatre invokes a sense of pride in the community* (Figure 5.6). It is worthy to note that the majority of the respondents, 90 percent, indicated that they either strongly agreed or agreed with the above statement. Conversely, only 3.3 percent of the respondents indicated that they disagreed with the statement that they Hollywood Theatre invokes a sense of pride in the community.

Figure 5.6: Hollywood Theatre invokes a sense of pride in a community.
5.3.2.2 Environment

Preservation of cultural resources is often justified because heritage buildings enrich our daily lives by offering an architectural richness to our visual environment, and provide a means for making a community more aesthetically pleasing, and thus more livable.

The Hollywood Theatre was opened in 1935 at the end of the movie palace era, when the design for theatres became simpler, with cleaner lines, and little or no ornamentation. One of the main distinguishing features of the Hollywood is the large neon sign that is visible as one drives or walks down Broadway. There is the large awning that protects patrons from the elements as they wait for a movie, and also the exterior box office make the Hollywood distinguishable among other buildings along Broadway. In an attempt to understand if the patrons of the Hollywood Theatre believe that the theatre contributes to the architectural diversity along Broadway, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statement: Does the Hollywood Theatre contribute to the architectural diversity of Broadway? On the one hand, 75 percent of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the Hollywood Theatre contributes to the architectural diversity along Broadway (Figure 5.7). On the other hand, 25 percent were neutral (Figure 5.7). One possible reason to explain the high number respondents which chose neutral as their response was due to the phrasing of the question. This is supported by the fact that a significant number of respondents asked for further clarification on the definition of architectural diversity. However, this result suggests that the respondents do believe that the Hollywood Theatre is different architecturally. Moreover, results to be discussed later suggest respondents value this diversity in a positive light (Table 5.2).
The above results suggest that the Hollywood Theatre is considered, by those surveyed, as adding to the architectural diversity of the community. The author was then interested in understanding whether the patrons value the conservation of the Hollywood Theatre as a heritage property. To this end, the respondents were asked two questions:

1. How important is the conservation of heritage buildings to you?

2. How important is it to you that the Hollywood Theatre is conserved as a heritage building?

The first question was asked to indicate respondents' attitudes toward the conservation of heritage buildings, in general. Approximately 77 percent of the respondents gave a rating of either a 4 or 5 (1 = not important, 5 = very important) (Figure 5.8). These results suggest that the respondents believe that heritage properties should be conserved. Question 2 was asked to understand the
respondent's feeling toward the conservation of a specific cultural resource, the Hollywood Theatre. Approximately 92 percent of those surveyed gave a rating of 4 or 5 (1 = not important, 5 = very important) (Figure 5.8). Thus indicating that the respondents also feel quite strong about the conservation of their neighbourhood theatre, the Hollywood Theatre.

![Chart showing conservation ratings](chart.png)

**Figure 5.8:** The respondents attitudes toward the conservation of heritage buildings, and the conservation of the Hollywood Theatre as a heritage building.

The author was interested in understanding whether or not the Hollywood Theatre contributes to making the community a more desirable place to live. Respondents were asked to rate on a scale from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree if: *Having a neighbourhood theatre, like the Hollywood, makes a community a more desirable place to live.*
Overwhelmingly, 96.7 percent of the respondents indicated the Hollywood Theatre makes the community a more desirable place to live (Figure 5.9). One explanation for the strong sentiment is the fact that the Hollywood Theatre is the only theatre within the community. These results do not indicate how patrons may respond if there were another theatre within the community, nor do these results indicate any sentiment respondents may have toward other cultural resources in the community. However, these results do suggest that a movie theatre as a cultural resource does make a community a more desirable place to live.

![](image)

**Figure 5.9:** Graph to illustrate that respondents believe the Hollywood Theatre makes the community a more desirable place to live.

The literature suggested that landmarks add character to the community’s streetscape and makes the community distinctive. On the survey, respondents were asked to rate the following statement from strongly agree to strongly disagree: *The Hollywood Theatre is a landmark which provides the neighbourhood with a distinctive character.* The respondents overwhelmingly agreed, 96.7 percent that they consider the Hollywood Theatre a landmark in the neighbourhood (Figure 5.10).
Results which will be presented later in this chapter also indicate that some patrons of the Hollywood recognize and value the theatre as a landmark in the community (Table 5.2).

![Bar chart](image)

**Figure 5.10:** Respondents indicated that the Hollywood Theatre is perceived as a landmark.

### 5.3.2.3 Economics

The literature revealed that having leisure activities within a neighbourhood leads to wider economic spinoffs for other businesses. It is hypothesized that the Hollywood Theatre may be acting in similar fashion as an “anchor store” in a community mall by helping to provide other businesses with potential customers and thus aiding the overall retail vitality of the neighbourhood. The hypothesis is supported by the fact that the Hollywood Theatre draws large numbers of people (maximum of 650 people/show) into the neighbourhood. The theatre on a daily basis draws on average approximately 350 people into the heart of Kitsilano. The Hollywood Theatre is surrounded by fruit and vegetable markets, coffee shops, restaurants,
pubs - all open prior to the early movie, and some after the last movie is over around 11:30 p.m.

In an attempt to better understand the economic relationship between the Hollywood Theatre and nearby businesses, respondents were asked to indicate what businesses you have visited or plan to visit while on Broadway this evening. Figure 5.11 illustrates that the surveyed patrons of the Hollywood visited or planned to visit a wide assortment of businesses in addition to going to the movies. Overwhelmingly, more than 93 percent of those surveyed indicated that they had visited or plan to visit additional businesses in the neighbourhood. The three most popular businesses attended were banks (23.2 percent), take-out pizza (15.2 percent) and cafes (11.2 percent). Conversely, only 3 percent of the respondents reported that they did not visit or plan to visit any business along Broadway that evening.

![Figure 5.11: The businesses which were visited or planned to be visited by respondents on the evening surveyed.](image-url)
In an attempt to better understand whether the Hollywood Theatre is acting as an "anchor" business, respondents' answers for question 2 were categorized according to the number of businesses each respondent either visited or planned to visit that evening (Figure 5.12). These results clearly indicate that most of the Hollywood Theatre patrons surveyed visited at least one additional business and approximately, 70 percent of the respondents surveyed visited two or more businesses in addition to the Hollywood Theatre.

![Number of Businesses Visited](image)

**Figure 5.12:** The number of businesses respondents visited or planned to visit on the evening surveyed.

The author was interested in determining whether the patrons value the Hollywood Theatre as contributing to the goods and services offered in the neighbourhood, because the Hollywood Theatre is the only theatre in the nearby vicinity, and one of two in Kitsilano. In an attempt to understand this question, patrons were asked to rate from strongly agree to strongly disagree, *Do you believe a neighbourhood theatre is an important contributor to the diversity of goods and services offered within the community?* Interestingly, 95 percent of the respondents to the survey
indicated they believed the Hollywood Theatre contributed to the diversity of goods and services within their community (Figure 5.13). The Hollywood Theatre is a resource that allows residents to make greater use of their neighbourhood, contributing to their overall happiness and quality of life.

![Chart](image)

**Figure 5.13:** The responses received as to whether the Hollywood Theatre contributes to the diversity of goods and services.

The author speculated that going to the movies is often combined with other social activities in an attempt to maximize people’s pursuit for leisure and relaxation. That is to say, people will often combine a night at the movies with dinner before, or maybe a social drink after the movie to reminisce (relive) the experience. In an attempt to test this hypothesis respondents’ answers to question 2 were categorized into the following: Services (bank); Grocery (grocery store, and produce markets); Food and Drink (pubs, cafes, restaurants, and take-out pizza) and Retail (retail store, pharmacy and video store). It is important to note that when the results were categorized in this manner, nearly half of all activities (businesses visited) undertaken by the respondents were related to food and drink. This result is
interesting because businesses related to food and drink tend to be considered social activities and thus lends support to the notion that the patrons surveyed in this study blend various social activities together to create an "event" or "night on the town."

The results to this point, have attempted to determine if a specific cultural resource, such as the Hollywood Theatre, is important to its patrons. Using the arguments presented in Chapter 2, patron's were asked structured questions (i.e., use of a constructed scale) to measure how much value or importance they place on the Hollywood Theatre. Near the beginning of the survey (question 4) patrons were asked to comment on: What three aspects do you value most about the Hollywood Theatre? The results from this question are important because they provide additional insight into what the patrons value most about the Hollywood Theatre. Respondents' answers were then coded into nine categories -- price, staff location, theatre atmosphere, heritage building, landmark, family-owned, theatre amenities and leisure. The categories used represent the variety of answers given by the respondents.

Table 5.2 displays the total number of responses for the nine categories and serves to highlight a number of interesting points. Firstly, the results obtained from this research show that price is considered to be an important aspect of the Hollywood Theatre. Secondly, location of the Hollywood Theatre was indicated as an important aspect by 27 respondents. Interestingly, approximately 70 percent (8 of 12) of the non-residents also indicated they appreciate the location of the Hollywood. Thirdly, a number of respondents wrote that they valued the Hollywood's "theatre atmosphere". Unfortunately, respondents were not asked to further clarify what they meant by "theatre atmosphere". As a result it is not possible to speculate whether the patrons were referring to an atmosphere intrinsic to the Hollywood Theatre (e.g., age and decorum of the building) or to the general atmosphere generated by going
to the movies. Fourthly, it is interesting to note that respondents indicated leisure as an important aspect they value about the Hollywood Theatre. This lends further support to the results discussed above (Figure 5.3) that the Hollywood Theatre is an important leisure activity for the patrons. Finally, this research also illustrated that the patrons' of the Hollywood Theatre appreciate the theatre as a heritage building. This result further strengthens the data discussed previously in which respondents clearly reported that they value the conservation of both heritage properties and the Hollywood Theatre (Figure 5.8).

Table 5.2: Table illustrating the aspects more valued about the Hollywood Theatre from open-ended question (question 4), organized by length of residence.

The indication of price as one of the most valued aspects seems to suggest that the Hollywood is an affordable leisure option for individuals. This result can be further supported with the results from the question How important is the price of admission to you when deciding to go to the Hollywood Theatre? Approximately 90 percent of the respondents gave a rating of 3, 4 or 5 (1 = not important, 5 = very important)
These results seem to further suggest that the affordability of the Hollywood Theatre is important to the patrons. The Hollywood Theatre is independently owned and this enables the management to set their own prices. The price of admission at the Hollywood Theatre includes two shows seven nights a week. The results seem to suggest that the Hollywood Theatre provides good value for the patron's money, and perhaps this is why respondents indicated price as important.

![Bar chart showing the importance of the admission price to the Hollywood Theatre.]

**Figure 5.14**: The importance of the admission price to the Hollywood Theatre.

The author hypothesized that an individual's values may be moulded or shaped by the length of time he/she has lived in the community. Specifically, it was thought, a long-time resident of the community may emphasize the importance of different aspects of the Hollywood Theatre, compared to an individual who has recently moved into the community. In an attempt to better understand the relationship between length of residence and the patrons' values, answers to question 4 were
coded according to length of residence and the aspects most valued. Table 5.2 highlights two interesting points which appear to support the notion that an individual may emphasize different aspects of the Hollywood Theatre depending on their length of residence in the community. Firstly, it is interesting to point out that only residents which have lived in the community for 11 or more years considered the Hollywood Theatre as a landmark in the community. Secondly, the importance that the Hollywood Theatre is a family owned business was highlighted by five respondents, four of which have lived in the community in excess of 11 years and one respondent more than six years.

5.3.3 Part B

Part B of the survey was an open-ended question that allowed respondents to describe any other factors that contribute to their feelings on why the Hollywood Theatre is important to the neighbourhood. These are listed in Appendix C, but can be categorized by themes as follows:

1. Sense of belonging in neighbourhood.


4. Historic building.

Most of the responses from Part B serve to further support the results presented above. While some of the responses to Part B discuss problems with the Hollywood Theatre, the responses are also indicative of the wide range of factors which respondents associate with the Hollywood Theatre. The results from Part A and B indicate the global manner in which it is appropriate to consider the importance of movie theatres as a cultural resource to a community.
5.4 SUMMARY

The findings from the closed-ended questions (Part A) support the proposition that the movie theatres as a cultural resource are important to the community. The open-ended question in Part A and B, further supported the arguments which were asked by the weighted questions.

This chapter has attempted to illustrate that cultural resources play a role within a community. Specifically, this chapter examined the Hollywood Theatre as a cultural resource in Kitsilano. The results from this chapter suggest that movie theatres do enhance a community's character, identity and sense of pride and do contribute to a complete community. The respondents to the survey suggest, at least in terms of the broad arguments from Chapter 2, that the Hollywood Theatre is an important cultural resource to the community. The final chapter will present the conclusions of the thesis.
CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis set out to explore whether cultural resources, such as movie theatres, contribute to the complete community concept. Through both a literature review and a case study, it sought answers to these questions.

1. What role do cultural resources play in contributing to the complete community concept?

2. What significance do local cultural resources have in their community?

3. How do neighbourhood movie theatres as a cultural resource contribute to a complete community?

6.2 CONCLUSIONS

The research disclosed that complete communities within an established metropolitan setting can be defined by several characteristics. Fundamentally, the complete community concept is a strategy aimed at broader goals for growth management and quality of life. Complete communities must be flexible, performance-oriented and evolving. The complete community goal is part of an integrated land use and transportation strategy reflecting themes of diversity, choice and compact form. This strategy demands a regional perspective, but must be balanced by the local values of existing communities.

Most significantly, the case study component of the research reveals additional considerations -- not reflected in the literature and policy documents -- affecting the pursuit of complete community goals. In these early days of complete community
planning in the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), consideration of these factors can enrich the complete community discussion, particularly as it relates to the prospect for successfully balancing regional goals and local interests.

This thesis examined the significance of a cultural resource to a community and how it contributes to the community. The GVRD has acknowledged that cultural resources contribute to the overall health and vitality of a community.

6.2.1 The Municipality

The municipality will be the interface between individual communities and the region and will be the focal point for balancing regional goals and local interests. This has implications for work loads and practices, expenditures, politics and the prospects for creating complete communities. It is at the community level that the issue of accommodating change and meeting local, and regional goals will have to be grappled with. Given that cultural resources are not a high priority of councils, representation of regional consideration by local planning is not likely to be provided by elected officials. Time and resources will have to be spent to conduct appropriate planning processes in all communities. In a period of decreased federal funding and the possibility of limited local political support, increased demands on municipal civil servants are inevitable.

6.2.2 The Region

The region and its planners may experience difficulties in meeting the cultural policy goals of complete communities and advancing the development of complete communities in established neighbourhoods, because each community has many different and diverse cultural resources. Having acknowledged the need for communities to determine their own needs in the complete community pursuit, the
region must ensure the timelines provided for in the cultural plan allow each community to determine the importance of their cultural resources.

Given the limited resources of municipal planners, an examination of the role of regional planning is also required. The region must actively explore practical ways to support municipalities in:

- representing a regional perspective
- identifying locally acceptable and realistic contributions to regional goals and,
- draft the cultural plan acceptable to the Region with a minimum expenditure of limited municipal resources.

The effort could begin with regional planners gaining greater exposure to the public and cultural resources which may clearly influence complete community developments. This could include regional support for cultural resource development -- a threatened planning function in most municipalities.

6.2.3 The Planning Role

The fundamental role of the planner as the interface between broad forces of change and life in communities is necessary. Complete community development will be enhanced by planners who can perform both traditional and emerging planning roles. A renewed emphasis of the significance of cultural resources is demanded by complete community planning. Expanding the role of the planner as: communicators, negotiators, mediators, community advocates and professional leaders able to navigate political issues and considerations is called for.
6.3 CULTURAL RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT COMPLETE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

The Greater Vancouver area is a metropolitan city of communities. Some communities are defined as an identifiable place with particular physical conditions, traditions or history. Other communities are not geographically-based, but rather are defined by people sharing a common identity or experience. Within a community, people learn about themselves and customs, and traditions are kept alive. There is great community-building potential by integrating cultural resources as part of the Region’s growth management strategy -- complete communities. The following are broad policy initiatives that the GVRD could pursue to implement the complete community strategy.

• Promote the development or expansion of cultural resources (libraries, parks, performing arts centres, art exhibition facilities, museum and movie theatres) in complete communities and urban centres.

• In general, use complete communities to guide the siting of different types of cultural resources, directing those facilities that attract large number of people to urban areas, because these areas: function as major community centres and gathering places; have unparalleled access through the transit system; and will accommodate a substantial amount of the region’s growth over the next 25 years. All types of complete communities are suitable for small cultural facilities. The scale of facilities should be generally compatible with the character of the neighbourhood in which they are located.

• Work with neighbourhoods and agencies to identify cultural resources of historic, architectural, cultural or social significance, especially in complete communities. Encourage neighbourhood-based efforts to preserve these resources, and apply public resources where appropriate. Identify structures, sites and public views, in addition to those already recognized, that should be considered for protective measures.
• Foster public life throughout the region by providing public spaces that are well integrated into the neighbourhoods they serve and function as "public living rooms" for informal gatherings and recreation, especially in more densely populated urban centres.
• Capitalize on the potential that cultural resources have for serving as symbols of the city and for expressing the identity of special characteristics of the area where they are located. Respect the surrounding context, emphasizing conservation and draw on the region's cultural heritage.
• Capitalize on opportunities for promoting complete communities and community identify through cultural resources.

6.4 FUTURE RESEARCH

Continuing with a community perspective, these findings could be tested and augmented by case study analyses of other cultural resources in other communities at different scales and contexts. This study raises the possibility of more in-depth analysis from:

1. How will local governments and regional policies and responsibilities affect complete communities and cultural resource planning?

2. What does complete community planning demand of planners and what planning skills and values can promote complete community goals?

3. Understand the changing status of local economic development across the GVRD and its role in complete community development and the significance of cultural resources.
4. How to promote partnerships among cultural planning agencies in municipal governments and other public and private entities to: (1) provide mutual support for the promotion, preservation, maintenance and development of cultural facilities, and (2) how to make these cultural resources visible, accessible and integrated with the community.

5. Recognize that institutions (libraries, museums, hospitals, and universities) represent cultural resources for the community in which they are located, the region and beyond, and work with these institutions as they develop plans for the future to encourage greater public access and enjoyment of these cultural resources.

6.5 CLOSING REMARKS

In any community there exist some buildings, features or areas that give it a special sense of time and place. These cultural resources can enhance a community's character, identity and sense of stability. Neighbourhood movie theatres, for example, are one of the many types of buildings with cultural significance in Vancouver communities. For the citizens of Vancouver, neighbourhood movie theatres have been part of the movie-going experience since the 1930s. Many of the neighbourhood theatres built in the 1930s are now gone, however, despite this loss some neighbourhood theatres have survived and continue to flourish and play a role in their respective communities. The Hollywood, the Ridge, the Park, the Dunbar and the Varsity theatres continue as popular fixtures in their neighbourhoods.

The GVRD is facing an era of growth, fundamental change and reexamination of regional and local quality of life. Within this context, the complete community policies of the Livable Region Strategic Plan have been developed to achieve a
region where human community flourishes within the built and natural environment. Since regional policy must be implemented through local action, balancing local and regional interests is essential. While regional policy is highly developed, it reflects only a general appreciation of local considerations. Understanding the local perspective towards growth, change and the implications of complete communities is necessary to successfully weave regional goals into the established metropolitan setting. The Hollywood Theatre case study is a preliminary contribution to building this understanding. It demonstrates that the diversity choice, and compact form of complete communities make sense locally to the degree they improve the quality of life of residents. Recognizing and tapping into this motivation holds the greatest potential for regional and municipal planners to intervene in the cycle of neighbourhood evolution for greater gains in the pursuit of complete communities.
NOTES

1 It has been suggested in fact, that achieving agreement on the definition of complete communities may be one of the factors hindering progress towards its goals. See David Harper, Opening Address to Complete Communities II Conference (Whistler Centre for Business and the Arts. Nanaimo, BC: 21 October 1996). In this address, the speaker notes that an unresolved challenge to building complete communities is to agree on a definition of the term. See also, Charles Lockwood, “The New Urbanism’s Call to Arms,” Urban Land 53, No. 2 (February 1994), 12.


3 The author recognizes that each municipality has developed or may develop their own cultural policy. However, for the purposes of the thesis, only the cultural policy at the regional will be examined.

4 Although this argument was not used in the survey, it is an argument for the retention of cultural resources and deems inclusion.

5 The model for this philosophy was the recent success of the phonograph. During the 1880s the phonograph was set up in the arcades in the heart of bustling cities, and for a few cents customers could select music or speeches, which they listened to through individual ear horns. These exhibits earned merchants a great deal of money before the phonograph became common in homes (Gomery, 1992).

6 For a time, vaudeville became the mainstay of live theatre. In 1919, there were reported to be more than 900 theatres in the country playing vaudeville. Vaudeville began as burlesque, using spectacular scenery, beautiful and scantily clad women, music and comedy to attract large, predominantly male, audiences. Vaudeville was a collection of variety acts which also featured sketches and short plays, often featuring leading actors. Vaudeville was one of the most popular forms of entertainment from the turn of the century until around 1930. Vaudeville with its liveliness and energy, could not compete with the movies. By 1931, all other vaudeville theatres had been converted into motion picture houses.

7 The five companies that owned and operated the most profitable theatres included: Paramount, Lowe's/ MGM, Warner Bros., Twentieth Century-Fox, and Radio-Keith-Orpheum (RKO).
There was very little literature written on the neighbourhood house.

The unbuilt, but zoned-for-building space above the structure is customary practice when trying to save heritage buildings. This density bonus can then be sold to other developers who want to exceed normal limits for a particular site. Density bonuses are incentives council gives to encourage property owners to preserve heritage buildings. If they preserve the heritage character as they develop, they get the right to sell off square footage that the zoning allows for that site, but has not been used by the building.

David I, will herein be referred to as Mr. Fairleigh, so as not to confuse the reader with the present owner, David II. Furthermore, the author knew David I personally, as Mr. Fairleigh. The quotes by Mr. Fairleigh are the result of personal communication between the author and Mr. Fairleigh prior to his death.

Respondents were asked to indicate which additional businesses they visited or planned to visit while on Broadway that evening.

Theatre amenities was used to encapsulate answers such as concession, large screen and variety of movies.


birnie, Peter. 1998a “Stanley swings to another era: Tonight’s grand opening of the refurbished Stanley Theatre features a big-band musical tribute that harkens back to the 1940s.” *Vancouver Sun.* October 28: C5.


British Columbia Film Classification. 2000. Website: http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/fc/使命.htm


Bula, Frances. 1997. “City councillors give go-ahead for Vancouver’s tallest
Approval of the Wall Centre tower is linked to a $500,000 deal that will allow the old Stanley Theatre to be converted into a new live-theatre space for the city. "Vancouver Sun. February 7: B3.


City of Vancouver. 1999. Website:
http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/community_profiles/kitsilano/index.htm


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Greater Vancouver Regional District. 1999. *Strategies for Regional Arts and Culture Development in Greater Vancouver.* Burnaby: GVRD.


*Moving Picture World.* 1907. 4 May: 140.

*Moving Picture World.* 1907. 5 October: 487.


Personal communication. 1998. Informal conversation between Mr. Fairleigh and the author during October and November 1998.


Appendix A
First Article on the Hollywood
New Hollywood Theatre Hailed as a Model Picture House
(News Herald 22 October 1935)

Opening of the Hollywood Theatre is welcome by the advertisers on this page. Enhance the value of your property by patronizing the merchants in your locality and keeping the stores rented.

The backbone of suburban entertainment life is the neighbourhood theatre. Inexpensive, comfortable, up-to-date and figuratively just around the corner from every home. These play houses which dot the city play a vital part in bringing enjoyment and education to the community.

Thus it is that the opening of a new theatre in any district is awaited with eager interest by suburbanites. Such a theatre makes its debut Wednesday.

As modern and completely equipped as any picture palace in Vancouver, the new Hollywood Theatre situated on Broadway and Balaclava Street is now ready to take place among the leading "small play houses of the city. When its futuristic doors swing open Wednesday to admit film fans of Kitsilano, Point Grey, Dunbar Heights and surrounding districts, the Hollywood Theatre will bring to those areas the most up-to-date equipment available.

The apparatus in its spacious projection room; the fixtures on the stage; the lighting; the sound; the ventilation, even the chairs are all the last word in theatre furnishings.

The Hollywood Theatre will serve another purpose besides being an entertainment asset to the community. It will virtually be a showplace for the Dominion Theatre Equipment Co. for its completely appointed with the products distributed by this long established Canadian firm.

The management of the company is justly proud of the chairs which they have installed in the Hollywood Theatre. They would grace an expensive home so stylish, sturdy and comfortable are they of steel construction, the frame is covered with a rich, dark upholstery. Watching a film from one is as comfortable as sitting at home listening to the radio.

The sound equipment, the famed Jewell wide range system, also is deserving of praise. It, too, is distributed by the Dominion Theatre Co. all across Canada. The control that this system has over unwanted noises is accentuated by the fact that the theatre itself is constructed for perfect acoustics.
Appendix B
Hollywood Theatre Survey
NEIGHBOURHOOD THEATRE SURVEY

I am a graduate student at the School of Community and Regional Planning, who is undertaking a thesis project concerning the importance of neighbourhood theatres within their communities. The purpose of this survey is to determine what characteristics of neighbourhood theatres you feel are important and how these features help you define your neighbourhood.

Your participation in this survey is highly important because it will help me gain a better understanding of neighbourhood theatres and the role they play in the community and apply this to my research.

Please indicate your preferences with respect to the statements listed below. Please answer by expressing how important each point is to defining your personal (or family’s) identity with the Hollywood Theatre.

PART A

1. How important is the price of admission to you when deciding to go to the Hollywood Theatre?

   Scale

   Not important 1 2 3 4 5 Very important

2. Please indicate what businesses you have visited or plan to visit while on Broadway this evening. (Check all that apply).

   □ Bank  □ Grocery store
   □ Produce markets  □ Restaurants
   □ Pubs/bars  □ Take-out pizza
   □ Pharmacy  □ Retail store
   □ Video store  □ Cafes
   □ Other  □ None of the above

3. How important is a neighbourhood theatre, like the Hollywood Theatre, as a venue of leisure/entertainment for you?

   Scale

   Not important 1 2 3 4 5 Very important

4. What three aspects do you value most about the Hollywood Theatre?

   1. _________________________________

   2. _________________________________

   3. _________________________________
5. How many times a month do you see a movie at the Hollywood Theatre?

6. How many people are attending tonight's movie with you, including yourself?

7. How important is it to you that neighbourhood theatres, like the Hollywood Theatre are family owned and operated since 1935?
   Scale
   Not important 1 2 3 4 5 Very important

8. How important is it to you that neighbourhood theatres, like the Hollywood Theatre, contribute to the cinematic heritage for Vancouver?
   Scale
   Not important 1 2 3 4 5 Very important

9. How important is the conservation of heritage buildings to you?
   Scale
   Not important 1 2 3 4 5 Very important

10. How important is it to you that the Hollywood Theatre is conserved as a heritage building?
    Scale
    Not important 1 2 3 4 5 Very important

11. How did you arrive at the Hollywood Theatre tonight?
    - Walk
    - Cycle
    - Transit
    - Automobile/Motorcycle
    - Other: (e.g. Dropped off by family/friends)

12. Please pick a number from the below scale to show how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.
    Scale
    1 = Strongly agree
    2 = Agree
    3 = Neutral
    4 = Disagree
    5 = Strongly Disagree
12a. Do you believe a neighbourhood theatre is an important contributor to the diversity of goods and services offered within the community? ______

12b. Having a neighbourhood theatre, like the Hollywood, makes a community a more desirable place to live. ______

12c. Having a neighbourhood theatre, like the Hollywood invokes a sense of pride in the community. ______

12d. The Hollywood Theatre is a landmark which provides the neighbourhood with a distinctive character. ______

12e. Does the Hollywood theatre contribute to the architectural diversity of Broadway? ______

13. Do you live in Kitsilano? If "yes", how long have you lived in Kitsilano? ______________________
   If "no", what community do you live in? ______________________

14. Male _____ Female ______

15. Are you over the age of 18? Yes _____ No ______

PART B
Do you feel there are additional characteristics which were not mentioned in Part A that contribute to your feelings on why the Hollywood Theatre is important in your neighbourhood, please describe or list these below.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Completed surveys may be returned to the interviewer. If you would like to discuss this survey or issues relating to neighbourhood theatres in general, please do not hesitate to contact me, Tammy Bennett 732-8240 at your earliest convenience.

Your time in completing this survey provides valuable information and is greatly appreciated.
Appendix C
Open Ended Survey Responses
Part B Open-Ended Responses

In the 60 surveys, 29 respondents had additional comments to: Do you feel there are additional characteristics which were not mentioned in Part A that contribute to your feelings on why the Hollywood Theatre is important to your neighbourhood?

I feel the Hollywood Theatre greatly contributes to the pride and maintenance of the neighbourhood.

The theatre is a very good form and affordable entertainment for one on a limited budget because I love movies.

Hollywood is a “draw” for the community of Kitsilano.

Staff are very friendly and helpful. Cashiers are a very pleasant welcome!!

Candy bar needs more variety of treats.

The Hollywood is the neighbourhood’s (Kits) soul.

Drink holders would be nice.

It is my opinion the architecture of the city needs to be saved. It gives the city and neighbourhood character and flavour.

The Hollywood Theatre is a main attraction to living in Kitsilano.

It is also a good place for families and keeps teens out of trouble.

Important to sense of community, stability and history.

The Hollywood has a lot of sentimentality for me. I have been coming here for over 30 years.

Enjoy convenience of living so close to the Hollywood. Nice to walk too. Love your theatre.

The Hollywood is good for the consumer and an attraction for the neighbourhood.

The Hollywood is a community centre. Your theatre is wonderful! Keep up the good work. But change the seats – too uncomfortable for 2 movies.

Hollywood is cool.
I feel the Hollywood Theatre markets to the needs of the community.

'Amateur' aspect to running of theatre contributes to bonding of patrons and staff.

Hollywood is part of Kitsilano.

I come to your theatre often. It is a pleasure being recognized by staff.

I have been coming to the Hollywood for almost 60 years, ever since I was a little girl. It is like my family.

It's a great place to bring my kids or drop them off. Good for family entertainment.

Very affordable.

Place to keep kids off streets.

Contributes to safety of neighbourhood.

Building stands out on street for neighbourhood.

Being recognized by staff. Which is friendly, smiling cashiers are wonderful (they do a great job)!!

Great theatre!!

As a student the Hollywood Theatre is an important way for me to "get out". I love it!!

Nice staff. Nice building.

Vancouver city has a responsibility to keep these buildings. Its too bad they don't try harder.

A unique building for Kits. The city has an obligation to keep these buildings.

Part of community. Like family.

It's a really cozy theatre. It feels like you are coming over to a friend's house, really warm and inviting.

I like the old building. It's unique in the neighbourhood. There's no comparison.

We love it here. It is nice to have something in the neighbourhood.
The Hollywood Theatre greatly contributes to the neighbourhood pride and maintenance.