

CITY OF BURNABY

COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

SUBJECT: HERITAGE ON THE HEIGHTS INTERPRETIVE PLAQUE PROJECT

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** Council approve the installation of six interpretive plaques on city and public lands as outlined in this report.

REPORT

The Community Heritage Commission, at its Special Open meeting held on 2003 July 17, received and adopted the attached report seeking approval for the installation of six interpretive plaques on city and public lands in the Hastings Street Business Improvement Area.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor Celest Redman
Chair

Councillor Sav Dhaliwal
Vice Chair

COPY: CITY MANAGER
CHIEF BUILDING INSPECTOR
DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING
DIRECTOR ENGINEERING
DIRECTOR FINANCE
DIRECTOR PARKS, RECR. & CULT. SERVICES
CITY SOLICITOR

TO: COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION 2003 July 15
FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING FILE NO.: 1650 01
**SUBJECT: HERITAGE ON THE HEIGHTS
INTERPRETIVE PLAQUE PROJECT**

PURPOSE: To seek approval for the installation of six interpretive plaques on city and public lands in the Hastings Street Business Improvement Area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **THAT** Council be requested to approve the installation of six interpretive plaques on city and public lands as outlined in this report.

R E P O R T

1.0 BACKGROUND

In 2002 the 'Heights Trail Partnership', that was formed to complete local improvements to the Trans-Canada Trail in North Burnaby, reconvened to discuss the possibility of completing a new project focussed on the Hastings Street shopping district. This group is composed of a representative from the Gilmore Community School, Heights Neighborhood Association, Heights Merchants Association, and Chevron Canada. The City of Burnaby has supported the project's initiation through staff involvement in the Planning and Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department through the Community Arts Development Program.

"Heritage on the Heights" is a project to rediscover and celebrate the history and heritage of 'The Heights' commercial district on Hastings Street in Burnaby. The year 2003 will mark the centennial of the construction of the original "Hastings Road" to connect Vancouver and Barnet through North Burnaby in 1903. The first business on the street opened along with the Vancouver Heights subdivision in 1909 and was soon followed by many others, creating the unique commercial district we have today. The project began with a series of public information sessions to gather memories of favourite people, places and buildings and old photographs of the area. The immediate goal was to gather information and photographs that could be used in a series of interpretive history plaques to create a heritage walk on the street and perhaps a future book using funds raised by the local community.

In September, 2002 the first "Heritage on the Heights" interpretive plaque was unveiled at Confederation Park to mark its 75th Anniversary. This report outlines the next phase of the project which is to manufacture and install six interpretive history plaques for the business and shopping district.

2.0 Burnaby's Heritage Interpretation Plaque Program

Burnaby's Civic Heritage program was initiated in 1988 with public interpretation as one of the primary goals. Burnaby's Community Heritage Commission has worked to introduce interpretation plaques and signs for heritage buildings and historic sites to increase the awareness of both residents and visitors of our city's heritage .

The sign program began in 1993 with a series of traditional bronze plaques and cairns installed along the route of Burnaby's historic 1891 Central Park interurban tramline (now the route of the SkyTrain Expo Line). The program switched to utilize the benefits of full graphic and colour interpretive panels in 1999. The Heritage Commission has partnered with local groups such as the Heights Trail Partnership to interpret history along the Trans-Canada Trail and the Burnaby Historical Society to interpret designated heritage buildings of Deer Lake Park. In both projects, the partner group provided substantial community funding for these projects while the city contributed resources of staff to plan, research and design the interpretation plaques.

3.0 Heritage on the Heights Interpretive Signs

The interpretive signs for the Heritage on the Heights project have been developed by the City of Burnaby Planning Department as part of the City of Burnaby's in-kind commitment to the Heights Trail Partnership. The overall size and design of the signs corresponds to that previously established for similar heritage interpretation projects in the city.

3.1 Sign Subjects and Locations

Through group discussion and consensus the Heights Trail Partnership members approved a series of six plaques for Hastings Street at key historic and prominent landscaped locations. A key factor in the locating the signs was spreading out the interpretation stops along the length of the Hastings Street commercial district.(see *attachment #1* and sign designs)

Sign One: "Hastings Street" Hastings Street and Esmond Avenue

This sign describing the construction of Hastings Street will be located in a landscaped planter at the north-west corner of Hastings and Esmond using a standard sign stand.

Sign Two: "Toonerville Trolley" Hastings Street and Ingleton Avenue

This sign describing the operation of the Hastings Streetcar line will be located in a landscaped planter at the south side of Hastings adjacent to the path now located on the

former Ingleton Avenue road right-of-way using a standard sign stand.

Sign Three: "Community Reflections" Heights Fountain Square

This sign will interpret the mosaic created for the Community Reflections project and be installed on the pavilion covering the mosaic display within the Heights Fountain Square.

Sign Four: "Regent Theatre" Hastings Street and MacDonald Avenue

This sign will be located on the south-east corner of Hastings and MacDonald Avenue against the building face which is painted with a mural celebrating the Regent Theatre, using a standard sign stand.

**Sign Five: "North Burnaby Municipal Office" (Helen's Childrens Wear),
4100 Block Hastings Street**

This sign will tell the story of the North Burnaby Municipal Office and the neon art of the famous 'swinging girl' at Helen's Childrens Wear located at 4142 Hastings Street. Because of the lack of public space against the building face the sign will be located in an unused tree well using a custom sign stand that conforms to all the safety requirements of the Engineering Department for street furniture.

Sign Six: "Burnaby Fire Hall No.1" Hastings Street and Carleton Avenue

This sign will tell the story behind Burnaby's first firehall and be located in the landscaped planter adjacent to Burnaby Fire Hall No.5 on the north-east corner of Hastings and Carleton Avenue using a standard sign stand.

3.2 Design and Funding

Each sign will be manufactured with full colour '3M digital prints' mounted on a sign-grade aluminum base. These panels will be mounted into aluminum frames with lexan covers and attached to powder coated steel stands. This type of interpretation sign has worked well to reduce vandalism and long term maintenance costs. Costs for the production and installation of the six signs is estimated to be about \$6,000.00 which will be borne by the community funds raised by the Heights partnership group.

Installation will be undertaken by the City of Burnaby Engineering Department. Ongoing maintenance costs and replacement will be the responsibility of the Community Heritage Commission.

4.0 Next Steps

The 'Heritage on the Heights' interpretation plaque project forms an important community-based effort to celebrate the history and heritage of one of the City of Burnaby's most historic and interesting commercial areas. These signs will add considerable interest to the Heights shopping district and contribute to the ongoing civic effort of the revitalization of the street.

With the concurrence of the Community Heritage Commission and Council staff will implement the manufacture and installation of the interpretive signs.



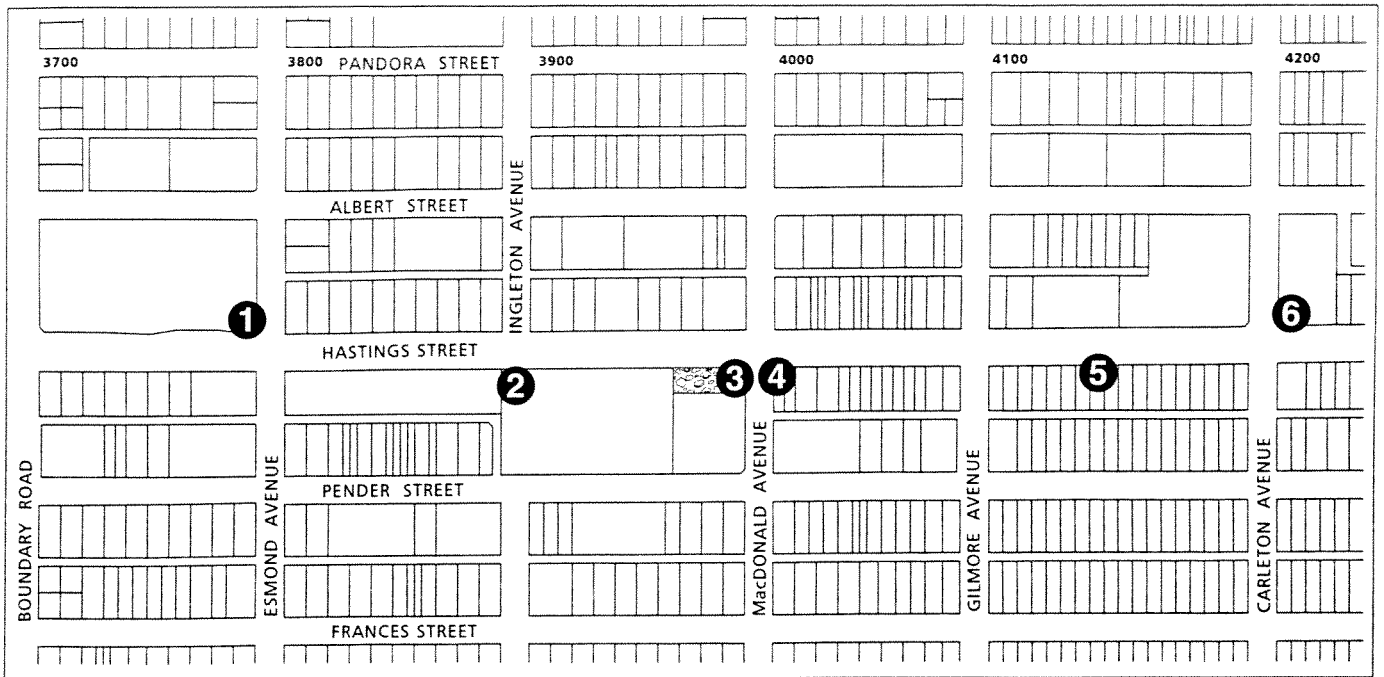
J.S. Belhouse, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

JW/tn

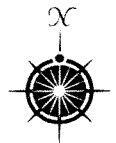
Attachment

cc: Chief Building Inspector
City Clerk
Director Engineering
Director Finance
Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
City Solicitor

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ATTACHMENT 1



**Heritage on the Heights:
Proposed Interpretation Plaque Locations**

- 1** "Hastings Street" Hastings Street and Esmond Avenue
- 2** "Toonerville Trolley" Hastings Street and Ingleton Avenue
- 3** "Community Reflectlions" Heights Fountain Square
- 4** "Regent Theatre" Hastings Street and McDonald Avenue
- 5** "North Burnaby Municipal Office" (Helen's Childrens Wear), 4100 block Hastings Street
- 6** "Burnaby Fire Hall No. 1" Hastings Street and Carleton Avenue

Heritage on the Heights

South side 3900 Block Hastings Street, 1939.

Hastings Street



Hastings-Barnet Road, 1909.



Hastings-Barnet Highway, 1927.



Automobile excursion on Hastings Street, 1913.



The paving of Hastings-Barnet Highway was front page news in 1927.

Burnaby's Hastings Street, although a historical extension of Vancouver's pioneer thoroughfare, has a unique story to tell. The Burnaby section of the road did not exist until 1903 when the B.C. Electric Company began construction of the Buntzen Lake hydro-electric project. A route was needed to convey the electric power to Vancouver from the line's inlet crossing at Barnet. The Provincial Government agreed to open the road to connect with the completed Hastings at Cassiar Street and the contract was tendered. The successful bidder was a Charles McDonough, a grocery man from New Westminster, who knew little about road construction. After felling all the trees on the road right-of-way, the crews began blasting and spreading gravel on the logs, thereby dulling cross-cut saws and delaying the work. The contract was soon after abandoned.

Hugh Gunn, an experienced road builder was brought in to finish the work and complete the difficult job of blasting a route to Barnet down the steep north face of Burnaby Mountain. Luckily, he discovered a crack in the face of the cliff, loaded a massive charge of blasting powder, and in a single blast created a road bed to Barnet. With urban growth Hastings Street was laid with wooden planks from Boundary Road to Sperling Avenue. A streetcar line was even constructed in 1913 that brought passengers from downtown Vancouver to the isolated heights of Capitol Hill. In 1927 North Burnaby residents celebrated the completion of the first section of concrete paving on the road. At the official opening, the B.C. Public Works Minister, the Hon. Dr. Sutherland, declared that the Hastings-Barnet Road would eventually form part of a "trans-continental highway to Montreal"!



Heritage on the Heights

South side 3900 Block Hastings Street, 1939

Toonerville Trolley



Opening of the new streetcar line, December 23rd 1913.

North Burnaby began its development through its connection to the B.C. Electric Railway system when the Hastings Streetcar line was extended to Boundary Road in 1909. Land Developers and Burnaby's Municipal Council lobbied for its further extension to Capitol Hill which was only achieved after negotiations over the company's franchise resulted in a deal. Finally on December 23, 1914 the first streetcar carried passengers from Boundary Road to Ellesmere Avenue on the heights of Capitol Hill.

The completion of the streetcar line came to late for the real-estate boom which collapsed with the recession and World War I. However, the streetcar line through the wilderness of North Burnaby became a much loved part of the community. Local residents dubbed it the "Toonerville Trolley", named after a newspaper cartoon strip "Toonerville Folks" by Fontaine Fox, which ran from 1908-1955 and featured characters and their adventures alongside a streetcar line in the country.

On January 15, 1949 at 1:45 am operator C.O. Owen and Streetcar #83 made the last run from Capitol Hill to Boundary Road. Vancouver's section of streetcar line was closed in 1955. The old tired streetcars were replaced with new "smart silent ultra-modern buses" which represented a whole new era of comfort and convenience to passengers. Gone too were the tracks, seen as a dangerous hazard to the motorist and replaced with "...a noble stretch of beautifully paved highway with traffic running decorously..."



Streetcar No. 88 at the "end of the line" at Ellesmere Avenue on Capitol Hill, 1921.



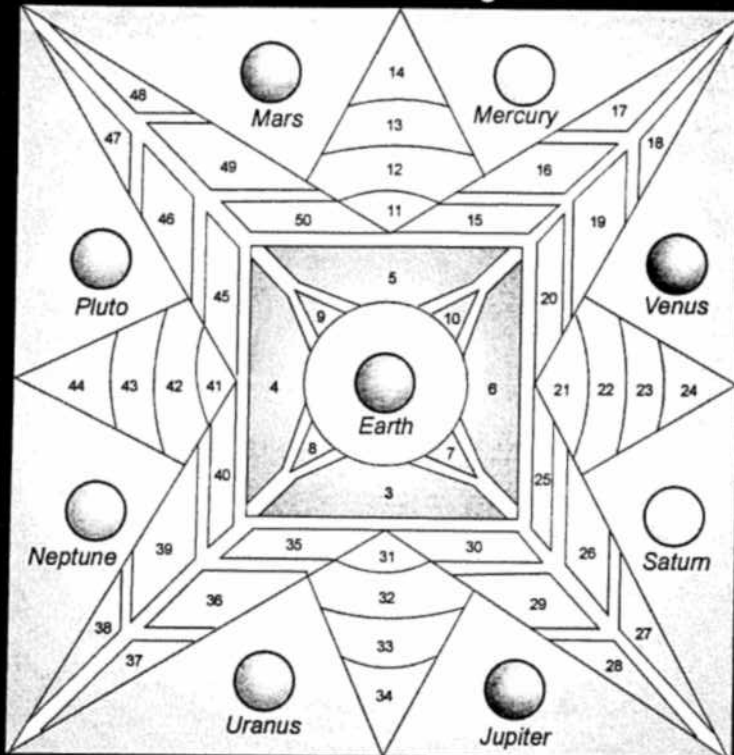
Last run of Burnaby's "Toonerville Trolley" January 15th, 1949.



Heritage on the Heights

South side 3900 Block Hastings Street, 1939

Community Reflections



Use this key to identify the meaning behind each Mosaic.

Through *Community Reflections*, a Burnaby Heights Millennium project, the Heights community marked the beginning of the twenty-first century by contributing sections of mosaic to a legacy art project. Between November 2000 and March 2001, artists Glen Anderson, Shelley Twist and Barbara Meneley, in cooperation with a community advisory committee, worked with local schools and community residents to design, create and install the ceramic tile and pebble mosaics found in the Square. In addition to providing our community with opportunities for artistic and cultural expression, *Community Reflections* has created a lasting legacy- a piece of public art that celebrates the Heights community. This collaborative effort of the Heights Merchants Association, the Heights Neighbourhood Association, Gilmore Community School, the City of Burnaby and Chevron Canada Ltd was made possible through grants from the Canada Millennium Partnership and the BC 2000 Community Spirit Grant Program.

The pebble mosaic that decorates the fountain pool was created by Burnaby North Secondary School students. Surrounding the fountain are portraits created by local community residents with seasonal images created by Alpha Secondary School students. Students of the Gilmore Community School, Rosser, Kitchner, Confederation Park and St. Helen's Elementary Schools created the series of tile mosaic panels that form the pavilion mosaic and those on the waste receptacles. The star motif of the pavilion represents the activities and scenes of local Heights community life in the context of the universe. While the mosaics that decorate the waste receptacles celebrate nature and the many languages spoken in the Heights.

1. Earth
2. Natural World and Earth's Environment
3. Pre-development of the Heights
4. Early Homesteaders
5. Early 1900's Waterfront Crabtown
6. Heritage Hastings Street Scene
7. Homestead Cabin
8. Wild flowers
9. Ice Cream
10. Wild flowers
11. Italian Pasta
12. Flag and Vines
13. Croatian food and Fishing
14. St. Helen Prays
15. Chevron Refinery
16. Sports
17. Outer Space
18. Outer Space
19. Hats Off Day
20. Ocean View
21. Skytrain
22. Chinese New Years
23. Community Garden
24. Kitchner School Cupola
25. Helen's and the Red Apple Market
26. Street Scene
27. Outer Space
28. Outer Space
29. Highway and PNE Roll-a-Coaster
30. View of the Second Narrows Iron Workers' Memorial Bridge
31. Bench
32. Rosser School Playground
33. Multiculturalism
34. Basketball
35. HOV Lane
36. Valley Bakery
37. Creatures from Outer Space
38. Creatures from Outer Space
39. Confederation Senior Centre
40. Soccer
41. Pets
42. McGill Library
43. Chinese Horoscope
44. Coffee Cup
45. TransCanada Trail
46. Eileen Daily Swimming Pool
47. Outer Space
49. Gilmore Community School
50. Beach



Heritage on the Heights

South side 3900 Block Hastings Street, 1939.

Regent Theatre



North Burnaby's Juvenile Band pose outside the Regent Theatre in 1930 August 14.



The Regent Theatre, 1939.

North Burnaby enjoyed the pleasure of the movies as early as 1920 when The Heights Theatre opened in 1920. The growth of North Burnaby brought the interest of the Langer Theatre Circuit which financed and constructed 'The Regent' for "photo play and vaudeville". On opening night - Friday, January 8, 1926, a feature programme included the movie "Below the Line" starring that famous dog 'Rin-Tin-Tin' and vaudeville varieties including the "Four Wonder Children". The first "talkie" played at the Regent in 1930.

The Regent became a well loved landmark of Hastings Street and an integral part of the Heights community. Admission for adults was 30 cents while children paid only 10 cents. Prizes offered by local businesses and the cheap offer to collect "poppy-patterned" china pieces, brought families in week after week. It was also the venue for many community events including: the Memorial Service to King George V in 1935, Victory Bond drives during World War II and the Beauty Contest to select Miss. Burnaby for the Miss. PNE competition in 1948.

In the 1950s movie theatres across North America faced a crisis as families stayed home to watch television. The Regent like so many others was forced to closed because of a lack of patrons and played its last movie in 1957. The building was purchased by Cunningham Drug Stores which gutted the structure to create a modern store. Today, although nothing remains from its former glory days, the theatre lives on as a cherished childhood memory of long-time Heights residents.

REGENT	
Theatre	Prices
Hastings Street	30c and 10c
A Grand Opening Programme at The First Year of the Langer Theatre Circuit on FRIDAY, JAN. 8 starring "Below the Line" With the Famous Dog "Rin-Tin-Tin" and Features John Harmon and June Marlowe A Musical, Harry Langdon Comedy "Foot and Hand" TICKETS AND FARES John Harmon, The Four Wonder Children A Lullaby Presentation by the "Whisper" Quartette	
OPENING PERFORMANCES Friday, Jan. 8 7 and 9 p.m.	

Opening Advertisement from The Burnaby Broadcast, 1926.



Heritage on the Heights

South side 3900 Block Hastings Street, 1939.

North Burnaby Municipal Office



Burnaby Municipal Tax Clerks at work, 1951.

The fact that North Burnaby grew in splendid isolation from South Burnaby created enough local dissention to call for a total secession as a separate municipality as early as 1911. The movement to form the Municipality of North Burnaby grew in the 1920s as an economically vibrant business community even formed its own Board of Trade in 1926. What particularly rankled local residents was paying taxes at the Burnaby Municipal Hall located far away at Edmonds. This either involved an expensive car trip or a ride on streetcars and interurban trams via downtown Vancouver.

During the Great Depression the Municipality of Burnaby was responsible for the distribution of "Relief" or welfare to the needy. In order to serve North Burnaby residents a small store building constructed in 1931 at 4142 Hastings Street was commissioned for this purpose. The Burnaby Police made this building their North Station and even built two cells to hold prisoners. This building evolved following World War II to become a miniature Municipal Hall with offices for tax and water payments, and all building permits. In 1955 a new Municipal Hall was opened at the geographic heart of Burnaby and the old Municipal Hall at Edmonds and the North Burnaby municipal office were closed.



The 'Swinging Girl' is Burnaby's premier historic neon light.

Helen's Childrens Wear

Helen Arnold opened Helen's Childrens Wear shop in the building next door to the old Municipal offices in 1948. In 1955 when Burnaby moved out, she moved into the vacated building. As part of the renovations, Helen enlisted the assistance of good friend Jimmy Wallace owner of Vancouver's Wallace Neon Company to create a new sign for her expanded business. One of the company's designers Mr. Reeve created the swinging neon girl which was installed in 1956. It immediately became a landmark on Hastings Street. In modern times the sign's design fame has spread far and wide as one of the best surviving examples of kinetic neon art in North America and is included as a destination on local neon night tours.



Heritage on the Heights

South side 3900 Block Hastings Street, 1939.

Burnaby Fire Hall No. 1



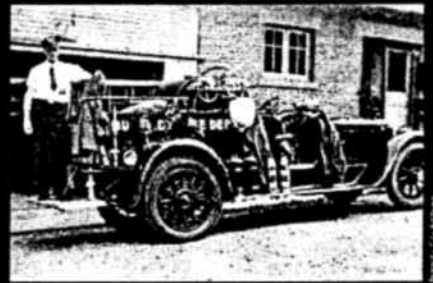
The second and ultra-modern No. 1 Firehall was built at Hastings and Willingdon in 1947 and demolished in 2001.

The property owners of North Burnaby began a volunteer fire protection committee as early as 1915. However a petition was circulated by residents and merchants to create a fire department to protect their property and lower insurance rates and presented to Burnaby Council. As a result in 1925 the old brick water pumphouse at Carleton Avenue and Eton Street was converted into a firehall, a fire truck was purchased. The local pump operator was informed that he was now on duty as a fireman with a volunteer crew ready to assist him.

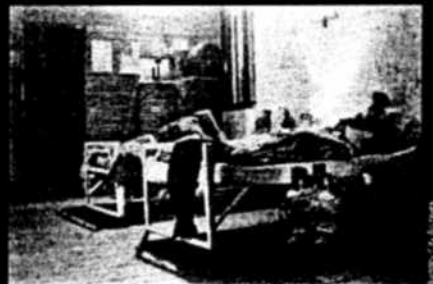
It was not until 1947 that the old pumphouse firehall was replaced with Burnaby's first purpose built fire hall at Hastings Street and Willingdon Avenue. On September 13, 1947 it was opened with a grand parade and declared as ready for the future as the most modern fire hall in British Columbia. It faithfully served its purpose until the modern era of earthquake and building construction codes declared it obsolete. The new fire station dedicated in 2001 has brought a new era of fire and safety protection to North Burnaby its design by Henriquez Partners Architects achieved a Lieutenant Governor of B.C. Awards in Architecture Medal.



The first Firehall No. 1 was the old pumphouse located at Carlton Ave. and Eton St. in 1925.



Fireman Ab Killer with the first firetruck, a 1926 Dodge, 1937.



Firemen await the call to duty in the old pumphouse firehall, 1936.

