

OUR SCHOOLS



MT. PLEASANT
14 ROOMS



STRATHCONA
14 ROOMS



HIGH
8 ROOMS

VANCOUVER
1902.



FAIRVIEW
8 ROOMS



DAWSON
14 ROOMS



SEYMOUR
8 ROOMS



ROBERTS
8 ROOMS



CENTRAL
8 ROOMS

SEISMIC UPGRADING IN VANCOUVER SCHOOLS



VANCOUVER SCHOOLS (Going, Going...)



GONE!

SEISMIC MITIGATION

- Vancouver is a high-seismic zone. No one would argue with the concept that our school buildings must provide safe environments for students.
- Current government policies to upgrade the seismic performance of schools, however, have had massive unintended consequences for many of Vancouver's historic schools.
- A provincial seismic mitigation program triggered a wave of aggressive building upgrading – and demolition – that was not anticipated when the program was initiated.

SEISMIC MITIGATION

- The greatest number of British Columbia's historic schools are in the City of Vancouver, and many were built at a time when the city was expanding rapidly during the Edwardian era.
- Many historic schools are major community landmarks.
- Most – even those of the postwar era – do not come close to meeting current seismic standards.

SEISMIC MITIGATION

- As designed, the provincial funding formula did not take into account the overarching issue of deferred maintenance. Mechanical systems, interiors and finishes were worn out after many years of hard use, and had been consistently neglected.
- The unexpected rehabilitation costs that resulted from the first investigations meant that new construction was an obvious outcome, and demolition started to occur.

SEISMIC MITIGATION

- The new schools were also promoted as “Green”, in opposition to the idea that heritage buildings are also a sustainable resource.
- Fear took hold of many, as parents were told that old schools could only be upgraded to 65-75% of new construction.
- As the program started to unfold, it appeared that historic schools would not survive the process, but the first demolition – of Charles Dickens School – triggered a significant public backlash.

SEISMIC MITIGATION

Provincial Seismic Mitigation Program:

- \$1.5 billion promised over 15 years to seismically upgrade schools at risk.
- Vancouver has 109 active school sites, many with multiple buildings
- 2007 Commonwealth Report “Vancouver Schools: Establishing their Heritage Value” - used as an “informal tool”
 - 35 schools on the Heritage Register
 - 26 proposed for the Register
- ± 65 schools at potential risk of demolition / rebuilding

SEISMIC MITIGATION

Vancouver School Board's position:

- “VSB’s mandate is the delivery of education; heritage value is considered where financially possible.”
- “Heritage retention is considered when the cost of renovation is equal or less than new construction, such as Douglas Elementary and Sexsmith Elementary”
- In some cases, heritage value can over-ride financial considerations, e.g.: Cost to “rehabilitate” Historic Kitsilano Secondary and retain 3 facades: \$66 million
- “VSB will develop and undertake a public process to seek proposals for repurposing the heritage buildings into another use.”

WHICH ONE IS NEXT?



PUBLIC SCHOOL, KITSILAND

B.

SOME
VANCOUVER



SEYMOUR SCHOOL

C.



HIGH SCHOOL

SCHOOLS



STRATHCONA SCHOOL



CENTRAL SCHOOL

ADVOCACY AT ALL LEVELS

- Different communities of interest at each school
- Individual advocacy groups for some sites
- Heritage Vancouver's Top Ten Endangered Lists 2004-2011 - key focus culminating in 2011 with the Top Three sites illustrating the school issue
- Featured in Heritage BC Newsletters and a focus of advocacy
- Heritage Canada's Top Ten Most Endangered List 2010

2004 Top Ten Endangered Sites

[Top 10 2004](#) | [< Back](#) | [Next >](#)

9. Charles Dickens Elementary School (1912) (Lost - updated)

Yet another of Vancouver's historic schools could bite the dust because the cost of seismic and other upgrades apparently cost more than a new school.

>> Roll over image to the right for an original/current comparison.

Similar to other early Vancouver schools, Dickens Elementary's brick walls, pitched roof and decorative pilasters are emblematic of the history of our city and its neighbourhoods.

The possibility that the fate of Dickens could well set a precedent for the loss of these landmarks across the city raised bluntly the question of our commitment to heritage: do we value our public heritage buildings, and how much are we willing to invest to save them for future generations?

Rolling over the image above, reveals the original structure, and how the building currently appears. Some ornamentation has been removed, the roofline has been changed, as well as painting over the different colours of stone banding.

Updated October 29, 2008: Charles Dickens school has now been fully demolished (1912-2008). During the demolition preparation, the stunning original stonework banding was revealed when the exterior red paint had been removed, until the wreckers ball completed it's task.



2009 Top Ten Endangered Sites

[Top 10 2009](#) | [< Back](#) | [Next >](#)

2. Vancouver Schools – Kitsilano Senior Secondary (1928)

2550 West 10th Ave (1928); plus many other schools

The Ministry of Education's formula for seismic upgrading heritage schools threatens many of Vancouver's heritage schools, Kitsilano Secondary is most immediately under threat.

What is the threat to Kitsilano Secondary School?

The possibility of Kitsilano Secondary School being completely or partially demolished is very real. Two options, currently being tested on the school website involve demolition of the school or demolition of all but significant portions of the 1928 heritage classroom block. Only one of the options calls for the complete retention of this significant heritage school.

Kitsilano could well be the next victim of the BC Ministry of Education's Seismic Mitigation Program. The Ministry's current funding formula favours new schools with approximately 2/3 of the square footage of the existing school over seismically upgraded heritage schools. The Ministry's formula does not take into account the heritage significance of schools and threatens the future of all of Vancouver's heritage schools. Unless the funding formula is changed, Kitsilano may go the way of **Dickens School**, which despite tireless efforts by the community, was demolished in the summer of 2008.



2010 Top Ten Endangered Sites

[Full List](#) | [< Back](#) | [Next >](#)

1. Vancouver Schools – Kitsilano Senior Secondary (1927)



Photo: Kitsilano Secondary School. © Heritage Vancouver Society

Many of these beloved community landmarks are now threatened with demolition, for reasons that defy common sense. The Vancouver School Board has stated that heritage is not high on their list of priorities, as they have already demonstrated through the demolition of Sir Charles Dickens School.

2011 TOP TEN ENDANGERED SITES



1. Vancouver Schools: Carleton (1896, 1908 to 1912)

Carleton School was in the news last year for all the wrong reasons. It was on the Closure hit list, and just narrowly dodged that threat. The Vancouver School Board has temporarily kept it open, but there is no guarantee of the future of this iconic neighbourhood landmark. Meanwhile, Carleton Hall, our oldest school building, sits deteriorating while there is a valid proposal for its re-use.

> [see full details \[updated\]](#)



2. Vancouver Schools: Kitchener (1914 & 1924)

It appears that the decision has already been made to demolish the 1924 brick portion of Kitchener School. While the highly significant 1914 portion will be retained, it will be moved and there is no information on the proposed level of building code upgrading, which could seriously compromise its heritage integrity. This wasteful and intrusive projects demonstrates what is wrong with the Vancouver School Board's approach to its historic structures. Is this demolition necessary?

> [see full details](#)



3. Vancouver Schools: Sexsmith (1912 & 1913)

Sexsmith School illustrates another threat to historic Vancouver Schools – redundancy. A new school will be being constructed beside the old one, with no guarantee of the future of the original building. This is exactly what happened at Charles Dickens School, which was eventually demolished. Sir James Douglas Elementary School is in exactly the same situation.

> [see full details](#)



HCF's 2010 Top Ten Most Endangered Places List

The Heritage Canada Foundation released its sixth annual Top Ten Most Endangered Places List on August 11, 2010.

The selection—presented here from the West to East Coast—was compiled from the results of HCF's call for nominations as well as those stories and news items followed throughout the year.

Vancouver Schools - Kitsilano Senior Secondary (2550 West 10th Avenue), Vancouver, B.C.— SEISMIC SHAKEDOWN

Historic Kitsilano Senior Secondary School faces demolition at the hands of an opportunistic school board using provincial seismic upgrade funding for building replacement. Kitsilano's school is emblematic of dozens of older Vancouver schools facing a similar fate.



Photo: Derek Von Essen

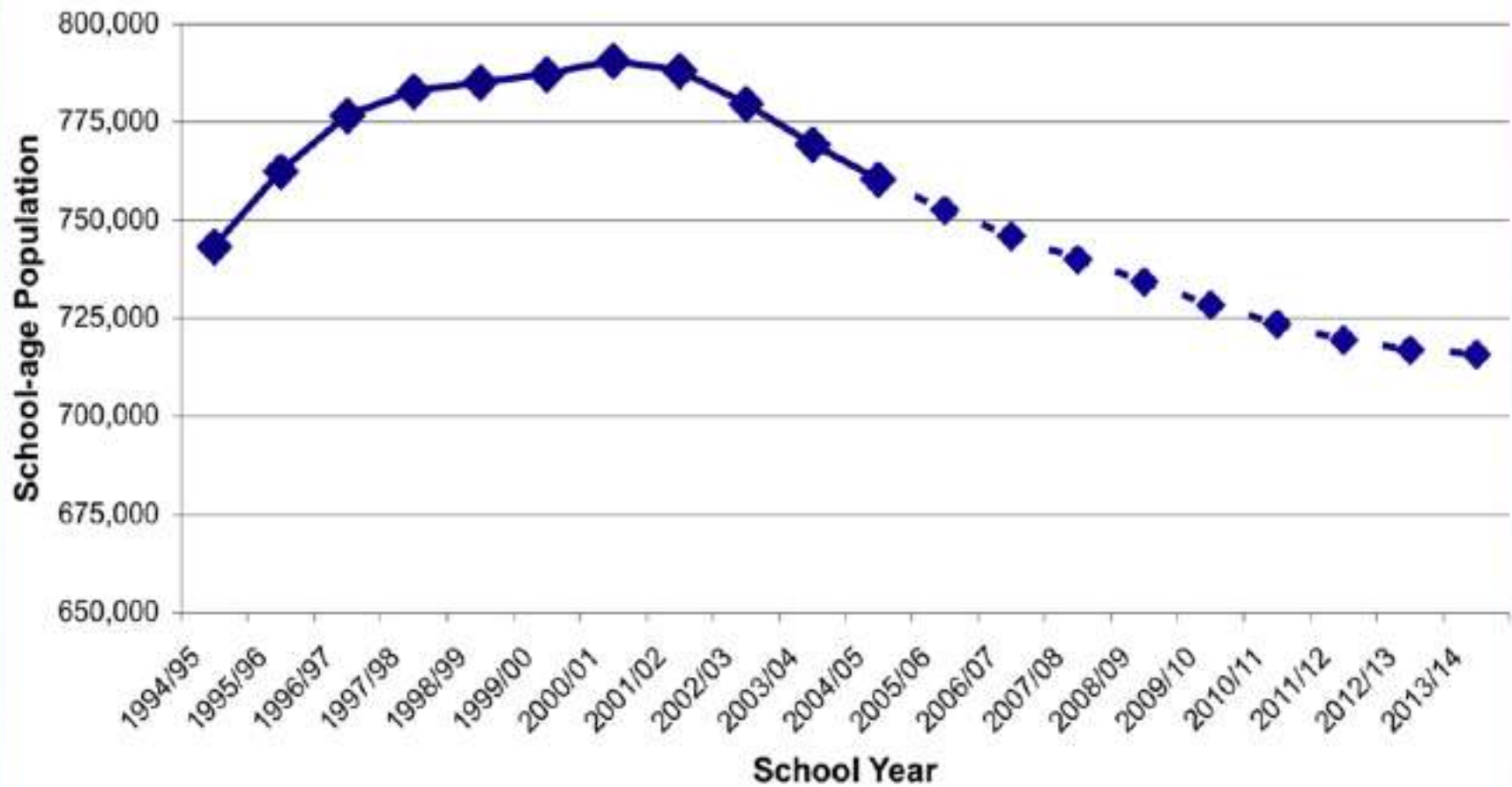


BUT WAIT... There's More!

A NEW THREAT: SCHOOL CLOSURES

- A complex and combative relationship between the Ministry of Education and the VSB (politics).
- Driven by budget shortfalls and declining enrollment.
- 5 East side schools were suddenly threatened with closure:
 - Sir Guy Carleton School (Register A)
 - Queen Alexandra Elementary (Register B)
 - Sir William Macdonald Elementary
 - Champlain Heights Annex
 - McBride Annex

Provincial enrolment trends



10/24/10

Sir Guy Carleton Elementary School

3250 Kingsway



10/24/10

Carleton Elementary – Unique characteristics

- The Carleton Elementary building is 114 years old and has a heritage score of 23/25, indicating that it has significant heritage value.
- In the 2004 VBE Seismic priority ranking, Carleton Elementary ranked 5 out of 103 schools in seismic priority. Major seismic mitigation is required for this building.

Sir William Macdonald Elementary



Macdonald Elementary – Unique Characteristics

- The Macdonald Elementary building is 105 years old and has a heritage score of 21/25, indicating that it has significant heritage value.
- In the 2004 VBE Seismic priority ranking, Macdonald Elementary ranked 79 out of 103 schools in seismic priority. Major seismic work is not anticipated for this school in the immediate future.

Queen Alexandra Elementary



Queen Alexandra Elementary

– Unique Characteristics

- The school shares its boundary with 6 neighbouring schools that all have surplus capacity.
- Two primary arterials traverse the catchment, one of which is a major truck route.
- Queen Alexandra is 101 years old and has a heritage score of 17/25, indicating that it has significant heritage value.
- Queen Alexandra ranked 62 out of 103 schools in the 2004 VBE Seismic priority ranking. Work is not anticipated for this school in the immediate future.



ARE WE EVER GOING TO RESOLVE THIS?

OTHER MODELS

- UBC RENEW delivers 4 buildings for the price of 3: approximate cost of upgrading is 67% of the cost of new construction.
- City of Victoria: seismic mitigation is ongoing; no demolitions anticipated.

SOME SUCCESSES













NEIGHBOURHOOD LEARNING CENTRES

- Three significant sites chosen to determine potential for a different vision for community engagement
 - Strathcona Elementary School
 - Queen Mary School
 - General Gordon School
- The process evolved into a model for a more comprehensive facilities feasibility study for each site that took into account a wide range of issues including heritage value

Strathcona Elementary School

Project Definition Report

- Clearly recognized as one of our most important heritage school sites
- Complex consists of 4 heritage buildings
 - Block C Junior Building 1897
 - Block A Senior Building 1914 & 1929
 - Block B Auditorium Building 1929
 - Block D Primary Building 1921
- Recommendation to retain and rehabilitate C, A and B, and offer D for public use







VIEW FROM PENDER ST.: EXISTING BUILDINGS



VIEW FROM PENDER ST.: PROPOSED CONCEPT



VIEW FROM KEEFER ST.: EXISTING BUILDINGS



VIEW FROM KEEFER ST.: PROPOSED CONCEPT

STRATHCONA ELEMENTARY RENEWAL PROJECT

**PROPOSED RENEWAL CONCEPT:
BEFORE & AFTER IMAGES**

Queen Mary School Project Definition Report

- General (but not unanimous) agreement on heritage value
- Recommendation to retain 1914 school, and demolish 1926 and later structures








General Gordon School Project Definition Report

- Recommendation for full replacement



SUMMARY OF CONCEPTS PRESENTED AT JUNE 2011 OPEN HOUSE

Building Footprint	Brief Description	Estimated Project Cost
Concept 1 	Retention of the 1922 and 1912 façades with new interior structure and lower basement slab to accommodate new learning spaces (with 26 portables)	\$22.1 million
Concept 2 	Retention of the 1912 façade with new structure along Bayswater (with 8 portables)	\$16.7 million
Concept 3 	Retention of the 1912 façade with new structure along West 6 th Ave with the existing basement used for storage (with 20 portables and temporary gym)	\$20.0 million
Concept 4 Preferred Concept 	Full replacement on the existing playfield/southern portion of the site (with no portables)	\$13.9 million
Concept 5 	Full replacement on the existing school footprint (with 26 portables and temporary gym)	\$17.8 million

Draft Audit Report released

October 5, 2011

Seismic upgrades to Vancouver schools could cost \$618 million - report


BY EVAN DUGGAN, VANCOUVER SUN OCTOBER 5, 2011

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STORY

PHOTOS (1)



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Vancouver School Board district officials are proposing a wide range of spending cuts for 2010-11 that include the elimination of 113 teaching positions in areas such as special education, band and strings, ESL and school libraries.

DRAFT AUDIT REPORT

- Seismically upgraded or replaced to date or underway: 34
- 48 schools still considered high-risk in the event of a “significant seismic event”
- Three options for each of the 48 buildings:
 - Seismic upgrades only: \$618 million
 - Seismic upgrades combined with general facility upgrades (required for at least 27 schools): \$1.1 billion
 - Replacement: \$858 million

NEXT STEPS?

- Out of this controversy, a precarious balance is being struck between the need to upgrade older schools and the need to preserve our heritage landmarks.
- We will not save every older school.
- Although we are still arguing about how to define it, heritage value is now being recognized as an essential criteria in the assessment of Vancouver's schools.