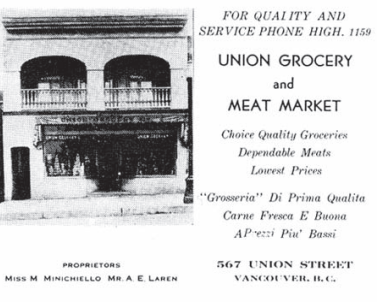


Architect E.E. Blackmore (also designed the Pantages Theatre on E. Hastings, and the Model School on Cambie) designed the imposing Jackson Apartments in 1910 in anticipation of a new Harris Street streetcar line that was to link the neighbourhood directly to downtown over the new Georgia Viaduct (Harris Street was renamed East Georgia in 1915). Walking east along E. Georgia, many other apartment buildings that were built for the same reason are still standing. These dwellings catered to the growing population that wanted to live on a transit route. Most of these buildings had retail spaces on the ground floor. The original store in this space appears in the 1911 directories as the Costalas Costa Grocery. Although it has changed names and hands many times since then, it is one of the few apartment building stores to retain a grocery function today. Historically, there was a commercial space in 505 E.



501 East Georgia Street



565 & 567 Union Street

This area was known as Little Italy as many buildings on Union street were owned by Italian immigrants. Samuel Minichiello (see archival photo on back) purchased the Union Grocery Store at 567 Union (#3 on map) from another Italian Canadian in 1911, and for a few years he ran a grocery delivery service with a cart. In 1916, Minichiello purchased a new Ford for \$660. He ran his business until 1950 when he left the neighbourhood. In 1909, the Battistoni family started the Venice Bakery on the 900 block of Princess Avenue, with a simple metal oven. In the 1920s they were able to expand to a small bakery location at 565 Union (# 2 on the map), where they were allowed to build a bakery in the back. Vaglio, an Italian bricklayer (who started the well-known local Vaglio Fireplaces Ltd. Company on E. Hastings) built them a big oven that could bake about 240 loaves at a time. After the depression the bakery moved across the street to 564 Union Street (# 4 on the map). This would remain the location for the Venice Bakery while it was owned by the family. In 1959, the business was bought, and in 1967 it was moved to North Vancouver where it is still in business today.

Benny's Italian Foods Ltd. has served the neighbourhood for over 90 years. The founder and family patriarch, Alfonso Benedetti, immigrated from Italy in 1909. With a friend he opened an ice cream parlour where they sold cigars, fancy chocolates and parlour treats. In 1917, Alfonso bought out his partner and set up Benny's Market. He and his wife Violet Teti, expanded the business to sell dry goods. Working hard through the tough times of the Depression and the post-war good times, they made a life for themselves and their family. Their son Ramon started work in the business in 1956, and helped propel it into a new era by importing Spanish, Portuguese and Italian products. Ramon and his wife Irma also began supplying many Italian stores from Vancouver to Prince Rupert as well as fishing and tug boats working at the port. With the threat of the freeway in the 1960s, many Italians left Strathcona. Alfonso and Violet died in 1970, and Ramon concentrated on supplying hotels like the Devonshire and renowned restaurants like Nick's Spaghetti House and Primo's. But times in the store were rough – one customer per hour – so Ramon's eldest daughter Janice, began working full time while he took care of the deliveries, buying, selling, and book-keeping with time still to tell a tale or two over coffee and invent the "Benny Burger." Ramon, his wife and children continue to run the store behind the original Italian marble countertop, and you'll even find the odd grandchild working at holiday time. Everyone works – like Alfonso used to say, "No Work No Eat!". Though much has changed in the neighbourhood Benny's still stands.



598 Union Street



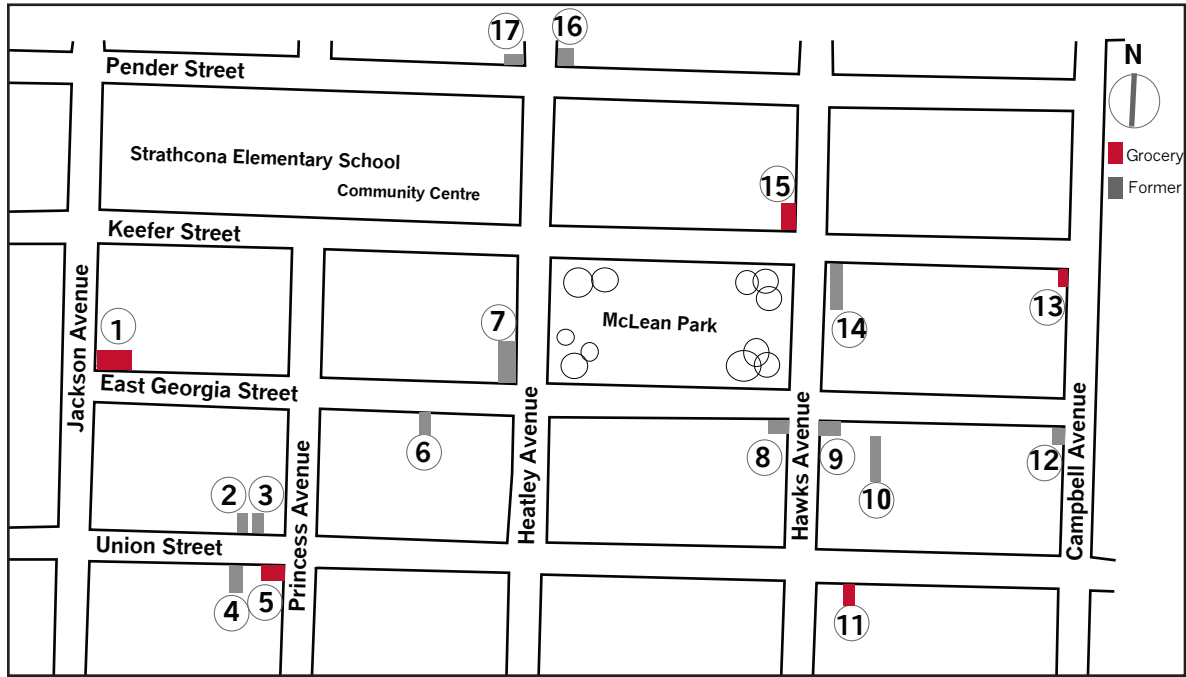
799 Keefer Street

This building dates from 1906 but the first grocery store doesn't appear on site until 1915. This first store was run by George Smith for 10 years. Then in 1945, after a few different incarnations, it was named the Keefer Grocery Store by Chinese owner Seto Mee. Although the store was run by different Asian families over the years, it maintained this name until 2007. In 2008, after a renovation expanding the store space, the Wilder Snail café and grocery store was established. Just one block away there were two other corner stores. 450 Heatley (# 16 on the map) housed a corner confectionery in the 1920s and 447 Heatley (# 17 on the map) housed a tiny grocery store from 1915 to 1951.



800 Keefer Street

The house in the centre of this property was built in 1894 and was simply a house for the first 40 years of its life. In 1935, this became the location for the Montreal Bakery which functioned on the site until 1955. The owner was Italian born baker, Lucien Zanon. Lucien and his wife Cecilia had started the Montreal Bakery across the street on Hawks (since demolished along with all the buildings on this block for the creation of McLean Park in 1963) but moved here for the potential to expand their business. The Zanon family built the Art-Deco inspired additions along the perimeter of the property, creating both a retail outlet at the corner and an industrial capacity bakery in the back (see archival advertisement below). In 1956, Willibald Taferner took over the bakery and renamed it Willy's Bakery, while the Zanon family ran a grocery store in the corner retail space. This configuration of bakery in the back and grocery store at the corner lasted for 10 years until 1966. The current owners have been here since 1993. A group of long-term local artists (among the founders of the East Side Culture Crawl), named the building Paneficio, from the Italian word for bakery, as an homage to the Zanon family and their descendents who continue to visit the site on occasion.



This house, one of the only brick houses in the city, was built in 1894-95 by Irish contractor and bricklayer, John Henry Freney. The original design, before the store was added on the front, is a typical British industrial town home that is very common in Ireland but is the only example of its kind in Vancouver. In 1928, Polish-born Adolf & Vanda Gutknecht built an addition on the front to house their business, the Georgia Bakery. After 10 years, the bakery was taken over by the Zielski family who renamed it the Wonder Bakery in 1940. 1944 was the last year for the bakery, and the building stood vacant for a few years. New businesses start to appear in the late 1940s such as West Coast Upholstering, Coleman Furniture and Bickle & Son Cabinet Makers, the evidence for which still stands in the huge warehouse structure in the back. From 1953-1974 a vegetable dealer named Wing Fong is listed at this address, but by the mid-1970s all commercial activity ceased.



640 East Georgia Street

679 East Georgia Street

Built in 1901 for Edwin Cassidy, this building has served as a grocery store from the time it was built until 1975. The Cassidy's ran the first store while living in the apartment above until 1915. In 1916, the store was taken over by Chinese grocer Ho Yet Young who ran it as the BC Grocery Co. until 1929. The name BC Grocery remained under various owners until 1970, including the Japanese Ohta family from 1929-1942. The upper storey of the building was always residential space, typically used by the operator of the grocery store. In 2000, through a Heritage Revitalization Agreement with the City of Vancouver, the building was rehabilitated and converted into 3 residential units. As part of the same development project, three new homes were built on the lot to the north as infill housing.



898 Keefer Street and 898 East Georgia Street

The grocery store at the corner of Campbell and Keefer was first opened in 1903 by George Melvin. After a few different owners, Albert E. Cowx took over the store for 13 years (1922-1935). In the 1940s it was run by Richard Eales and his wife, members of the small Yugoslavian community in Strathcona. They ran the business for almost 10 years as the Povovich Grocery (The owner, wearing the apron, is shown in front of the store in the 1940s photo below). In the 1950s the store was run by different Chinese families and was renamed Jang's Grocery and finally Wayne's Grocery, which remains the current name today. At 898 E. Georgia (# 12 on the map) a grocery store started in 1914, and there were two adjacent stores as well (at 890 and 888 E. Georgia). Ownership and store names changed frequently. In the 1940s the corner store was known as the Campbell Avenue Grocery and was run by various Eastern European immigrants who lived in this part of the neighbourhood. From 1955-1962, Yoshio Hanada ran the store. This is a rare example of a returning Japanese Canadian after the removal and internment of the community during WWII. From 1962 to 1975 the corner store seems to have been used as a residence. In 1975 it was re-opened it as the Kong Corner store. In 1997, a local potter converted the space into a pottery studio known today as the Corner Shop Pottery Studio.



810 Union Street

The Union Market started as a Chinese laundry in 1913 owned by Gin Lee. The Gin Lee Laundry was in business for 8 years. In 1927, Henry Olenyk opened a grocery store on site. The store portion of the building was not very active throughout the 1930s and 40s. Some of the short lived businesses in that period were the Economy Store (run by Hejiro Matsubayashi) and for some time it was listed as a confectionery. In 1945 Steve Stasuk, most likely a Ukrainian immigrant, ran a confectionery here for 15 years (with bootlegging services out the back). In 1962, Armando Gomes founded the Gomes Grocery at this location which he ran for 32 years, thus starting the long tradition of Portuguese ownership at this corner which has since become a neighbourhood landmark. In 1993 the Bernardino family (Anibal and Maria Gloria), also of Portuguese descent, took over the business as the Union Market which continues the tradition of a Portuguese bakery and grocery store to this day.



708 Hawks Avenue

This home was built in 1905 by Vancouver policeman Thomas Crawford. In 1920 Nicola and Marian Di Tomaso moved in. The Di Tomasos, of Italian origin, built the addition to the front in 1923 for a family business store. From 1924 onward, 708 Hawks was home to the Georgia Confectionery (see photo from 1945, right). The Di Tomaso family continued to live here and run the store until the 1970s. Another business was located in the long warehouse-like structure (the back of 820 E Georgia, # 10 on the map). This was a meat packing factory in the 1950s where sausages were made and sold. This humble lane warehouse was the first location for Freybe Brothers Sausage Manufacturers in 1956. Freybe's Meats operated here from 1956-1959 until their business outgrew the location. Today, Freybe's is located in Langley, producing more than 120 varieties of specialty meat products.



701 Hawks Avenue

These row houses were built in 1908. Upon completion, the end unit at 701 Hawks became the East End Grocery run by Albert Pomfret. Upstairs was a residential suite originally home to African-American plasterer named George Scanton Chatters. From 1920 to 1941, this was the Royal Grocery which was run by a series of Japanese Canadian families. By 1941, Japanese Canadian families lived in three of the seven units in this building. After the attack on Pearl Harbour in 1941, the Canadian government bowed to racist demands for the removal of all Japanese Canadians near the coast, calling it a precautionary against a possible spy network. The loss of the Japanese Canadian community had a significant effect, especially in Strathcona which was so close to Japantown. From 1942 until 1975, the Hawks Grocery (see early 1970s photo on reverse) was lived in and run by a series of Chinese families until the building became so run down that the 3 northern units, including the store, were condemned in 1975. In 1984 the rowhouse was bought and rehabilitated. Today all the units are residential.



Strathcona, Vancouver’s first neighbourhood, was first known as the East End until the 1950s, when City planners began using the name Strathcona. In the beginning, the East End referred to an area that took in everything east of Main to Campbell Avenue and from Burrard Inlet to False Creek. The Strathcona of today is bounded by Hastings, Campbell, Gore, Atlantic, and Prior Streets.

Almost from the beginning, Strathcona has been home to both business and residences. Some, like the Venice Bakery or Freybe, which started in the back of local Strathcona houses, later became large, well-known Vancouver firms; others such as Benny’s Italian Foods, are well known but are considered local neighbourhood secrets. Strathcona has always been known as a cosmopolitan neighbourhood. School enrolment at the Lord Strathcona Elementary School in the 1920s included Japanese, Chinese, Italians, Jews, and a smattering of Scandinavians, Russians, Ukrainians, and Blacks along with many others including Syrian Christians, and for a few years, a group of Gypsies.

While there were no strict ethnic boundaries within the neighbourhood, many of the Japanese lived on the north side of Hastings Street, while the Italian community primarily occupied Union and Prior Streets. Between these two groups were the Ukrainian Hall at Hawks and Pender and the Russian Orthodox Church on Campbell Avenue. Eastern European immigrants tended to settle around these streets. The centre of Jewish life in Strathcona was the Schara Tzedek Synagogue located at Heatley and E. Pender. Many Jewish homes and businesses could also be found along E. Georgia Street. The 1910 Fountain Chapel on Jackson and Prior (previously the German, Norwegian and Lutheran Church) was the spiritual home for Vancouver’s small Black population centred around Hogan’s Alley. The Growing Chinese population lived on the edges of the Chinatown commercial district.

During the Great Depression, cows were still being kept in the backyard barns in Strathcona and sent out to graze on the False Creek flats. To survive, families traded and bartered with each other. Local stores helped many families with credit that the store owner sometimes could ill afford. The corner stores also shared their space with other businesses in an effort to survive. Many residents took up junk collecting, making the rounds of the city with a wagon and horse to make some money.

The advent of the Second World War put an end to the Depression but helped tear the community apart. In 1942, nine thousand Japanese Canadians in Vancouver were forced to give up their homes, businesses, and possessions because of the alleged threat they posed to Canada. In Strathcona, the removal of the Japanese community was very evident as the many Japanese-run grocery stores closed and many homes were left vacant. The local school lost half of its student population, the Japanese kids being the single largest ethnic group in Lord Strathcona Elementary.

The war sparked debate in Canada about Citizens Rights, and the government found it harder to justify the lack of enfranchisement for large segments of the populations. In May 1947, the Exclusion Act, which limited immigration and citizenship for people from China, was lifted and the process of reuniting long-separated families began.

The late 1940s also saw the migration of two important communities from Strathcona to other areas: the Jewish community went south-west towards Oak Street where they could now afford bigger homes and to build new synagogues. The Italian community was absorbing a huge post-war immigration wave of relatives and compatriots which also required bigger, newer homes and institutions. Most Italians in Strathcona went east on Hastings, to Commercial Drive and even Burnaby.

In 1947, Dr. Leonard Marsh, a University of British Columbia architecture professor, began a survey of Strathcona that culminated in the publication of the 1950 report *Rebuilding a Neighbourhood*. Professor Marsh saw ‘blight’ in Strathcona. Marsh’s report determined that the neighbourhood should be cleared and rebuilt to save the rest of Vancouver from the horrors of blight.

By 1957 the City had accepted the report’s recommendations to demolish the entire neighbourhood and to replace it with new, modern housing. Initial protests to City Hall were ignored and an urban renewal program got underway with the help of federal and provincial financing. The City proceeded with building the first ‘healthy & dignified’ low-rental housing project in 1959 as part of the redevelopment, on the site of the old McLean Park (bounded by Jackson, Dunlevy, Union and East Georgia).

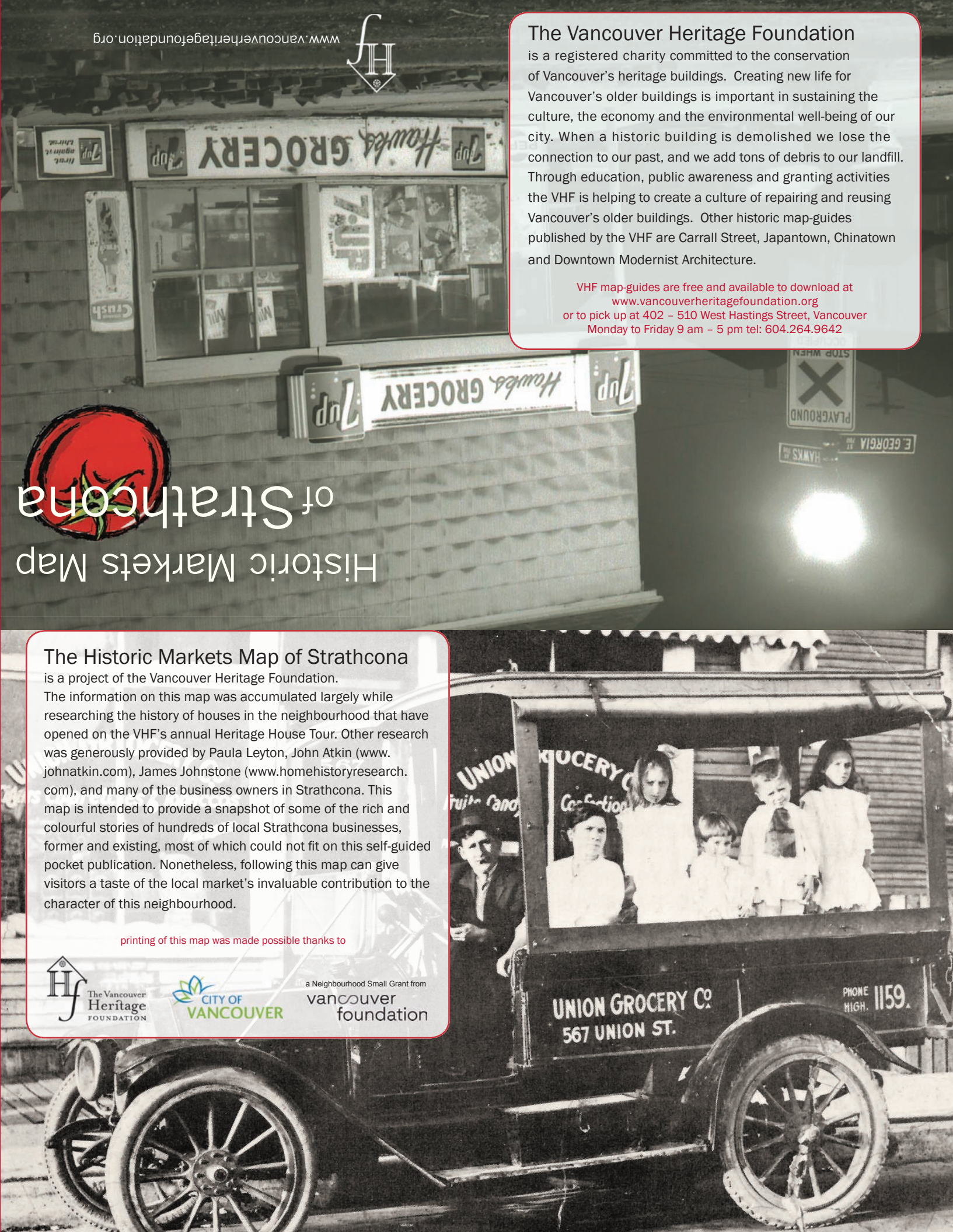
Fifteen blocks of the neighbourhood had already been acquired and cleared by 1967 when the city announced its plans for a freeway through Strathcona, Gastown and Chinatown to connect the Trans-Canada Highway to downtown Vancouver. The outcry from the public about this second proposed program was loud and clear. People were outraged about the lack of public consultation and the amount of destruction the new roads would cause in the downtown and West End. In December 1968, three months after the final redevelopment stage was announced, the neighbourhood mobilized. Over six hundred residents attended a meeting that was to be the founding of the Strathcona Property Owners and Tenants Association (SPOTA). Its aim was to make sure that “the people who lived in the area would be fully informed and their interests and community protected”.

The 1968 election of Pierre Trudeau as a Prime Minister brought hope to the neighbourhood. The minister responsible for housing was sent on a cross-country tour to assess the government’s housing programs. SPOTA took the opportunity to argue against the City’s plans and promote the case of rehabilitation of existing housing. Vancouver’s City Council was told that funds for the last stage of redevelopment were frozen while the federal government reviewed all current plans. At the same time, it was told to involve the community fully in the planning process - something that had never happened before. A committee of SPOTA sat down with civic, provincial, and federal government representatives to investigate the possible rehabilitation of Strathcona’s buildings. After two years of discussion, a \$5 million experimental program began. Completed in 1975, it gave the neighbourhood new parks, sidewalks, and a community centre.

The confidence gained by the saving of Strathcona motivated SPOTA and the community to look into developing non-profit housing on the vacant lots left after the City’s demolition activity had destroyed about 30% of the neighbourhood’s historic building stock. Other improvements both by the City and local residents were initiated during this period, such as new sidewalks, boulevard landscaping and individual house renovations. People began to move back into Strathcona and many corner stores at this time were converted into residential dwellings. These conversions were probably also due to the shift in shopping culture to malls and supermarkets and in people’s increased accessibility to family cars.

In 1989, a three-year Neighbourhood Planning Program was initiated to study issues such as local traffic and the threat to heritage buildings. A citizen’s committee worked with a number of municipal departments to write a new set of guidelines and zoning regulations to protect Strathcona’s historic buildings. This planning committee became the Strathcona Resident’s Association (SRA), which is still active today and has initiated many innovative programs over the years to improve and maintain what is uniquely Strathcona.

Today, Strathcona is a neighbourly place where residents meet as they walk to the corner store, walk the dog and kids or practise Tai Chi in the park. Through the efforts of its residents, Strathcona has not just survived, it has thrived, and today it is a diverse, healthy community and a special place to live.



Historic Markets Map of Strathcona

The Historic Markets Map of Strathcona

is a project of the Vancouver Heritage Foundation. The information on this map was accumulated largely while researching the history of houses in the neighbourhood that have opened on the VHF’s annual Heritage House Tour. Other research was generously provided by Paula Leyton, John Atkin (www.johnatkin.com), James Johnstone (www.homehistoryresearch.com), and many of the business owners in Strathcona. This map is intended to provide a snapshot of some of the rich and colourful stories of hundreds of local Strathcona businesses, former and existing, most of which could not fit on this self-guided pocket publication. Nonetheless, following this map can give visitors a taste of the local market’s invaluable contribution to the character of this neighbourhood.

printing of this map was made possible thanks to

