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| **Building Name** | **Building Year** | **Building Type** | **Address** | **Latitude** | **Longitude** | **Description** |
| Byrnes Block | 1886 | Commercial | 2 Water St, Vancouver, BC V6B | 49.283471 | -123.104810 | This expansive structure was once the cornerstone of Maple Tree Square, the meeting place for citizens of the growing metropolis of Granville. It stands on the site of Gassy Jack Deighton’s (Gastown’s namesake) second saloon, (which stood in the shade of the enormous maple tree, near the water where “a little to the east, you could paddle through to False Creek at high tide, avoiding the treacherous narrows.”) The existing building was opened as The Alhambra Hotel, after the great fire of 1886, by George Byrnes, a colourful former Sheriff of Barkerville, and was so baroque and swanky it dared to charge over a dollar a night! Beside such inducements as a beautiful view of the harbour, ornate window pediments, top floor pilasters, a decorated cornice, and a chimney pot for every room, the Alhambra boasted two outdoor privies in the back alley. After The Great Fire of ’86, most new buildings were constructed with brick instead of wood and this was one of the earliest. Cast iron was introduced to construction in order to support the added weight of brick and stone, as in the upper storey of the Byrnes Block. |
| Dunn Block | 1889 | Commercial | 1 Alexander St, Vancouver, BC V6A 1B2 | 49.283780 | -123.104029 | This was once a warehouse serving the ship chandlery and hardware business of Thomas Dunn, a member of Vancouver’s first city council. Its location meant that it was accessible to both the railway and the waters of Burrard Inlet, which today are at some distance to the north. The architect successfully harmonized arched and rectangular windows to create a handsome façade. Fine brickwork and decorated cast-iron pillars (inscribed with the name of Ross and Howard Ironworks) combine structural necessity with visual interest. |
| Hotel Europe | 1908 | Commercial | 43 Powell St, Vancouver, BC V6A | 49.283342 | -123.103898 | This was the earliest reinforced concrete structure in Vancouver, and was the first fireproof hotel in Western Canada. The style was called ‘flatiron’, the wedge shape being like that of an iron used for pressing clothes. It was constructed at the height of the elegant Edwardian Period, a marked change from the ornament of earlier designs, especially of the Victorian era. Its exterior walls of flat brick and sparse decoration, its impressive roof-cap and its looming shape when seen from Maple Tree Square, as well as its mode of construction, foretell the exciting century to come. The lobby retains its original tile, marble and brass finishes, as well as beveled glass and enameled wall tiles. The site was originally occupied by The Tivoli Saloon, which advertised free lunch with a 5-cent schooner of beer when the lowest denomination was 10 cents, forcing the customer to order two beers! In a police raid on the saloon in 1886 the grand sum of $10.75 was seized from a game, apparently illegal, called ‘stud-horse poker”. The temperance movement was strong during this early period in Vancouver’s history but most establishments found their way around it in one way or another. |
| Second Ferguson Block | 1886 | Commercial | 200 Carrall St, Vancouver, BC V6B | 49.283212 | -123.104219 | This two-storey building replaced an earlier structure built of wood that was destroyed in The Great Fire of 1886. Both were erected by A.G. Ferguson who built railway tunnels for the CPR, and housed the railway’s land offices. This relatively simple building is not without architectural merit. Stilted arched windows and keystones are imaginatively grouped into pairs on the Powell Street front, and a bracketed cornice in painted galvanized tin caps the façade. |
| Abrams Block | 1887 | Commercial | 210 Carrall St, Vancouver, BC V6B 2J1 | 49.282898 | -123.104102 | There has been a hotel on this site since Vancouver’s earliest days. The Tremont Hotel was a popular watering hole before it was destroyed in the 1886 Great Fire. It reopened just days later as a crude shack, but by 1887 the owners had rebuilt their hotel. They must have liked the original’s Italianate style because the new building was almost identical in appearance to the original but this time in brick. In the 1887 Vancouver directory the Tremont was advertised as “the only brick hotel in the city… the bar is equipped with the best brands of imported wines, liquors and cigars. C.L. Carter (Louis), Proprietor.” The exterior detail is interesting because it was constructed in wood, a departure from the usual galvanized tin seen on nearby buildings. A balcony running the full width was replaced by the small iron balconies installed during a major renovation. |
| Boulder Hotel | 1890 | Commercial | 1 West Cordova St, Vancouver, BC V6B 2J2 | 49.282741 | -123.104529 | This structure is an example of resistance to the prevailing and complicated Victorian style of its time. It is sublimely simple, with its plain stone façade ornamented by only a scarcely discernible cornice separating the ground floor from the one above. It was one of the two earliest buildings in Vancouver to have plain rectangular windows with no surrounding stonework to enhance them. The rusticated stonework alone is an interesting feature. The third storey was added to the building a decade after the structure was built. |
| Lonsdale/Dunn Miller Block | 1889 | Commercial | 8 – 28 West Cordova St, Vancouver, BC V6B | 49.282595 | -123.105013 | Originally built in 1889 for hardware merchant Thomas Dunn, this building housed Vancouver’s first public library upstairs, consisting of a reading room with 400 volumes, a smoking room, a lecture series and, progressive for the time, a policy to admit ‘ladies’! This Italianate style building later housed numerous fraternal groups and served as a meeting place for the Jewish community before an official synagogue was built on Heatley Avenue. Today it is the home to the Army and Navy Surplus Store. |
| Merchants Bank/Pigeon Park | 1913 | Commercial | 1 West Hastings St, Vancouver, BC V6B 1G4 | 49.281531 | -123.104481 | The Canadian Pacific Railway had tracks running between their False Creek yards and Burrard Inlet along an alignment that cut through the regular street grid of the area. When the tracks were lifted in the 1930s the open space in front of the Mercantile Bank was landscaped and used as a park honouring the pioneers of the city. Better known to locals as Pigeon Park, it is a favourite gathering place in the neighbourhood. Standing in the park you can visually follow the former rail line through the blocks north towards Burrard Inlet and south to False Creek. The Mercantile Bank was designed in an odd shape to accommodate the rail line. The first-rate stone carving chiseled on site, is well preserved. Pilasters and frieze in cut stone conceal a fireproof steel frame designed to support an addition of seven stories that never took place. The grandeur of the building reflects the importance this part of the city had in the early 20th Century. |
| Templeton’s Building | 1895 | Commercial | 1 East Hastings St, Vancouver, BC V6A | 49.281495 | -123.104227 | William Templeton was a grocer from Ontario, and was Vancouver’s sixth mayor. He built the first brick building in Vancouver on this site immediately after The Great Fire. The existing building was put up a decade later and shows an effort to dress up the plain brickwork with rugged stone trim, creating a richly textured façade. An interesting feature is that there are pilasters decorating the Carrall Street side of the building but not that on Hastings, indicating that the former was the more important thoroughfare in the 1890s. As with most of its neighbours, this building was home to a wide variety of businesses that came and went with the times, beginning with the original grocery store, harness shop and liquor outlet. |
| BC Electric Railway Co. Building | 1911 | Residential | 425 Carrall St, Vancouver, BC V6B 6E3 | 49.281121 | -123.104532 | By the time the B.C. Electric built this depot the company’s interurban system was the largest in Canada, reaching sixty miles up the Fraser Valley to Chiliwack. Streetcars, operating since 1890, entered through the enormous arched windows of the terminus while trains entered the building from the large square opening on Hastings Street. The Canadian Pacific Railway spur line went along the west side of the terminus. When streetcars were replaced by buses and the B.C. Electric (now B.C. Hydro) moved to Burrard Street, the ground floor was closed in for a bank. The design of the building reflects the trend toward plainer lines and geometric decoration that had occurred by 1912 with the influence of the Art Nouveau era, and of innovations in the manufacture of building materials. |
| Pennsylvania Hotel | 1906 | Commercial | 6 East Hastings St, Vancouver, BC V6A | 49.281465 | -123.104244 | If the Alhambra Hotel, with its two privies in the lane, wasn’t good enough, you could by 1906, move up to what is now called the Pennsylvania but began as the Woods Hotel and then the Roger. Five stories of “every room with a view” bay-windowed rooms, hot and cold running water, 20 bathtubs, an elevator, and telephones for everyone! The architect was Newfoundlander William Tuff Whiteway who worked for a time in California, and one can perhaps see both influences in this building. Tiers of bay windows cover both facades, a fashion which typified San Francisco architecture of the period. |
| Holden Building | 1910 | Municipal | 16 East Hastings St, Vancouver, BC V6A | 49.281430 | -123.103988 | This building served as Vancouver’s city hall between 1929 and 1936, the fifth floor having been converted into a council chamber. Today the structure stands as an example of an early Vancouver ‘skyscraper’, and of the trend toward simplicity in 20th century architecture. It is faced with stone top and bottom, brick in between, and the middle floors are shorter in height than the ground level or attic. |
| Chinese Freemasons Building | 1901 | Commercial | 3-9 West Pender St, Vancouver, BC V6B 1R3 | 49.280599 | -123.104753 | The Chi Kung Tong, a traditional Chinese fraternal organization, first appeared in Canada in 1863 to provide welfare assistance to miners in the Cariboo gold rush. Built in 1901, the Chi Kung Tong purchased this building in 1907. The Chi Kung Tong changed its name to Chinese Freemasons in 1920 in order to forge links with European Freemasonry. Because of the way the structure blends the Chinese and Western traditions of architecture, this building is the perfect headquarters for an organization that sought to form bonds with Europeans. The Pender Street façade facing Chinatown has traditional Chinese recessed balconies and ironwork. The Carrall Street side of the building faces the entrance to Gastown and presents a Victorian Italianate façade. The Freemasons supported Dr. Sun-Yat Sen’s attempts to bring democracy to China. During visits to Vancouver to increase support and raise money for his cause in 1910 and 1911, Dr. Sun-Yat Sen was hosted by this society. The building was even mortgaged to fund Sun-Yat Sen’s 1911 rebellion. |
| Chinese Times Building | 1902 | Commercial | 1 East Pender St, Vancouver, BC V6A 1S9 | 49.280631 | -123.104165 | Local businessman Wing Sang built this bay-windowed structure. The largest of Vancouver’s several Chinese newspapers were published here from 1939 until the early 2000s. The printing press, which used 5,000 different characters, was visible through the window. |
| Sam Kee Building | 1913 | Commercial | 8 West Pender St, Vancouver, BC V6B 1R3 | 49.280427 | -123.104721 | An act of defiance in 1913 resulted in the construction of this 6’2” (1.8m) wide building. To widen the road the city expropriated land on Pender Street, demolishing Chang Toy’s grocery warehouse and leaving him with a very narrow strip of land. No compensation was offered and the furious Toy, rather than sell his prime location cheaply to his neighbour, hired architects Brown and Hillam to design a building for the site. The series of bay windows increases parts of the usable width of the upper floor. The basement, which runs the length of the building and extends under the sidewalk to double the square footage, housed public baths. The section under the sidewalk was cleverly lit by glass prisms set in the pavement. The building, made entirely of riveted steel, was restored in 1986 by the current owner, Jack Chow and architect Soren Rasmussen. |
| Lim Sai Hor (Kow Mok) Benevolent Association | 1903 | Commercial | 525-531 Carrall St, Vancouver, BC V6B 5K2 | 49.280337 | -123.104576 | This building was originally constructed in 1903 for the Chinese Empire Reform Assoc., whose focus was to bring about political reform in China. It was the most influential association in Chinatown at the time. Their influence faded when China fell into revolution in 1911 instead of reform within the Imperial framework. They owned the building until 1945 but rented it to the newly formed Lim Sai Hor Assoc. in 1926. The Lim Sai Hor Assoc. finally bought and extensively renovated the building in 1945. Its recessed balconies identify it with South Chinese architecture, but much of the original detail disappeared in the 1945 renovation. It is one of the only original structures remaining in Shanghai Alley. It’s frontage on both Carrall St. and Shanghai Alley provides a glimpse of how the neighborhood looked in the earliest days of Chinatown. The building is home to an ancestral altar, built in 1993 which is used for commemorative ceremonies by society members. |
| The Chinese Cultural Centre | 1980 | Tourism | 50 E Pender St, Vancouver, BC V6A 3V6 | 49.280537 | -123.103254 | This centre provides a home for the promotion of Chinese heritage and culture in BC. Offered here are classes in Chinese and English language, traditional arts and crafts and tai-chi as well as an annual Chinese New Year Celebration. The building, a competition-winning design by James K. M.  Cheng Architects and Romses Kwan & Associates, incorporates the elements of traditional Chinese architecture; the north-south axis, courtyard plan, exterior colonnades and covered balconies all with a modern interpretation. In 1998, the Museum and Archives building was added to the NE corner of the complex. It was designed by local architect Joe Wai with traditional motifs including flared eaves, screened windows and post and beam construction. A permanent collection and rotating exhibition highlight Chinese Canadian history. |