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| **Building Name** | **Building Year** | **Building Type** | **Address** | **Latitude** | **Longitude** | **Description** |
| Vancouver Buddhist Church | 1905 | Religious | 220 Jackson Ave, Vancouver, BC V6A 3B3 | 49.283062 | -123.093324 | In 1904, 14 Buddhist followers decided to build a Buddhist church in Vancouver. Reverand Senju Sasaki arrived as the first minister for the congregation in Vancouver on October 12, 1905. One year later, the property at 32 Alexander Street was purchased. This location became the centre of activity for Jodo Shinshu followers. From 1942-1949, the Vancouver Buddhist Church was closed and the shrine was taken to a Slocan Valley internment camp. By 1951, enough of the community had returned to re-organize. However, the building had been sold. In 1954 the Methodist Church building at 220 Jackson Avenue was purchased. The building was renovated and served the Buddhist congregation until 1979 when the existing church was built on the site. |
| Oppenheimer Park | 1898 | Scenic | Powell St @ Dunlevy St, Vancouver, BC V6A 1G6 | 49.282677 | -123.094346 | The Powell Street Grounds at Powell and Dunlevy, has always been a significant public space for all who live in this area. The park was officially opened in 1898 and was eventually named for Vancouver’s second Mayor, David Oppenheimer. It was a social gathering place where sports were played and festivals held. The (Japanese Canadian) Vancouver Asahi Baseball team played many of its games here beginning in 1914. The team competed against other groups in their community, and eventually expanded to take on external teams. The accomplishments of the team have been recognized with introduction into both the BC Sports and Canadian Baseball Halls of Fame. Through the Great Depression, the park served as a meeting ground for protesters and the starting point for labour action and protests. The best known action was the “On to Ottawa” march during the Depression. In October 1936, the park was declared the only park where political, religious and other views were permitted to be publicly voiced. Many Japanese Canadians celebrated 1977 as the centennial year for Canada’s first known Japanese immigrant, Nagano Manzo. Part of the centennial festivities that year included the ceremonial planting of 21 memorial Sakura (flowering cherry trees) by issei pioneers (first generation Japanese immigrants) which was coordinated by Tonari Gumi (Japanese Community Volunteers Association). Many Legacy Sakura continue to blossom every spring and are enjoyed by park users to this day. Currently the park serves the diverse and complex needs of the area residents. In addition to traditional park uses, it is a social gathering place for a variety of community activities including the annual Powell Street Festival which is held in the park on the August long weekend. |
| Uchida Building | 1891 | Commercial | 437-441 Powell St, Vancouver, BC V6A | 49.283131 | -123.094365 | This building began as Russ House Hotel, housing a variety of European residents. In 1902, brothers Kino and Chiyohichi Uchida bought this site and converted it into a boarding house. Retail space was rented as a tobacco or grocery store for many years, and from 1910 to 1912 there was a pool room in the building. By the 1930’s, one of the Uchida’s sons, Motasaburo, became a doctor and set up a practice in the building. Although covered in vinyl siding today, underneath it is in its original state, as is the Yamagashi Building at 451 Powell. Note the “breezeway” leading to the lane at the east wall of 451 Powell. The neighboring buildings to the west, which were all reconstructed in the 1980’s, boast replicated wooden facades that reflect what the original “boomtown” or “pioneer” storefronts on this block would have looked like in the 1890s. Historically, the buildings were separate structures, with “breezeways” running back to the lanes between them. During their reconstruction, these passages disappeared as buildings were combined. |
| New World Hotel | 1912 | Commercial | 390 Powell St, Vancouver, BC V6A | 49.283160 | -123.095616 | This grand four-storey commercial building was designed by architects Townsend & Townsend for Shinkichi Tamura, a Japanese merchant who served as Canada’s first Commissioner of Trade to Japan and who later returned to Japan to pursue a political career. The building’s exterior exhibits unique and graceful sheet metal ornamentation cornices, corbels and Corinthian pilasters that were used on other Townsend & Townsend commissions in Vancouver such as on the Quebec and Shaughnessy Manors. Although the owner was of Japanese origin, the name and design of this building reflect the community’s integration into the North American culture, unlike the more traditional approach that is evident in Chinatown. The “New World Hotel” was known as the ‘heart of Little Tokyo’ and was the most substantial rooming house in the neighbourhood. A variety of Canadian Japanese-owned businesses were run in the street level spaces over the years, including a newspaper office, drugstore, bakery, confectionery, toy store, dentist, tailor, salmon packing outfit, dressmaker and Tamura’s own Canada and Japan Trust Savings Bank. |
| Shibuya Clothing | 1912 | Commercial | 376 Powell St, Vancouver, BC V6A | 49.283034 | -123.095980 | Designed in 1912 by architect William F. Gardiner for owner David Sanguineti, this was the location of the Sun Theatre from 1912-1918. Sono Shibuya became owner in October 1919, and moved his clothing business into the building after some renovations. Upstairs was the Showa Club, the neighbourhood’s only night club and gambling joint. Some former residents remember a sign on the front door that read “Don’t gamble; but if you must, don’t go to the Chinese gambling house”. Apart from the colourful theatre and night club elements of the history of this site, the building provided an eclectic mix of uses including rental rooms, light industry, offices and retail. |
| Hotel Yebisuya | 1907 | Commercial | 358 Powell St, Vancouver, BC V6A | 49.283158 | -123.096394 | Built in 1907 for its Japanese Canadian owner, Jinshiro Nakayama, this building reflects the early success and desire for Japanese Canadians to settle down with their families. Its Edwardian-Commercial, bay-windowed design (originally three floors) is typical of other retail areas of the time in Vancouver, and similar examples can be seen all along Main St. and Commercial Dr. The Japantown neighbourhood physically resembled other Vancouver neighbourhoods as its residents strove to assimilate into Canadian culture. Hotel Yebisuya was a rooming house for seasonal workers while the retail spaces had Japanese run businesses such as the Ikeda barbershop, Nabata shoemaker, cafés, restaurants, a meat shop, a tailor and a pool room. |
| Maikawa Department Store | 1908 | Commercial | 365 Powell St, Vancouver, BC V6A | 49.283138 | -123.096195 | The Maikawa & Co. General Store opened in 1908 and quickly became the largest commercial operation on Powell Street. Owner Tomekichi Maikawa’s two brothers also opened stores on the same block in the same period. Behind their stores was a boarding house for their employees, most of whom were new Japanese immigrants destined to apprentice in these businesses. Maikawa family businesses took over most of the north side of this block in the 1930’s. In 1936, two lots were consolidated to construct a new Art Deco style store designed by architect T.L. Kerr, reflecting a prosperous and stylish community (the first store still stands behind the Art Deco facade). The modern “Streamline” Maikawa department store, its name still visible across the façade, carried the latest fashions but operated in its new, expanded version for less than 5 years before it was confiscated by the government when the Japanese Canadian community was expelled from Vancouver. |
| Morimoto & Co. Dry Goods | 1912 | Commercial | 326-328 Powell St, Vancouver, BC V6A | 49.283183 | -123.097139 | The very first tenants in this mixed-use building were a Japanese Tea-Room on street level, Japanese Rooms in the upper floor dwellings and the Kane Shooting Gallery in the basement. Over the years, the rental portion changed names to Stanley Rooms then King Rooms, and continues to be a rooming house today. The Tea Room evolved into a dry-goods store, run by various Japanese owners: Yamarichi, Morimoto and Higashiyama. Although U. Morimoto & Co. leased the store for only 2 years (1920-1921) the Morimoto name is still visible on the tiled entrance today. This building was also the address for the Canadian Japanese Social Athletic Club in the 1920’s. Other examples of rooming house buildings with retail space on the ground floor can be seen on this block. |
| Fuji Chop Suey | 1931 | Commercial | 314 Powell St, Vancouver, BC V6A | 49.283180 | -123.097374 | An interesting mix of Chinese and California influenced architectural features, this 1931 building was home to the Fuji Chop Suey restaurant, serving Chinese style Japanese cuisine. In the late 1920’s the trend was to design buildings in revival styles: updated traditional English, Dutch and Spanish designs. The Japanese community in Vancouver was attuned to current trends and experimented boldly in non- traditional architecture, “fusion” cuisine and modern fashion styles. This building is a charming hybrid that boasts a Chinese style colour, with California Mission style roofline, terra-cotta roof tiles and ornamental appliqués. It is the only balcony building in this style outside of Chinatown. The Fuji Chop Suey restaurant, owned by Fuji Tadaichi, was one of the few restaurants where Japanese Canadian families could be served. Most other local restaurants were for men only, and many restaurants outside of the Japantown neighbourhood would not serve Asians. The second floor was rented out for weddings. Ironically, in 1942, this very hall was used by the federal government to plan the uprooting and internment of the Japanese Canadian community and the disposal of their properties. |
| Komura Building | 1905 | Commercial | 269 Powell St, Vancouver, BC V6A | 49.283221 | -123.099475 | Although only two historic buildings are left on the 200 block of Powell St., this is where the Japanese Canadian community began and from where it radiated. The first property bought by  Japanese immigrants circa 1898 stood at 230 Powell. 269 Powell is an early Edwardian corner building built sometime in 1905 for George Stevens, and first appeared in the city directories as the location for Komura Bros. General Store in 1906. Hiyakujiro Komura evolved from tenant to building owner in 1911, when he purchased the site, probably the best testimony to a growing and successful business. The Komura Bros. General Store was one of the longest, continuous Japanese Canadian owned businesses in the area. Present and active at this location from 1906 until relocation of the community began in 1941, the landmark quality of the building is still evident in the mosaic floor-tile entrance marked with the Komura name. |
| Lane House | 1891 | Residential | Lane between 300 Block of Powell St & Cordova St, Vancouver, BC V6A | 49.282685 | -123.096088 | This Lane House is among the oldest standing buildings in Vancouver. Alleyways were much more utilized historically than they are today. Some lots became completely built up, front to back, when individual service buildings became joined to other buildings. Lanes were accessed by “breezeways” between buildings, and typically had not only stables and storage sheds but also houses, businesses and vegetable gardens. Unfortunately, most breezeways have been filled in, so access to lane buildings today is mostly from the alleyways. |
| Sisters of Atonement Mission | 1929 | Religious | 255 Dunlevy Ave, Vancouver, BC V6A | 49.282563 | -123.095505 | The Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement arrived in Vancouver in 1926 to run the Catholic Japanese Mission School, founded in 1912. The Mission school and centre was the first of its kind in all of Canada. It ran language programs, a kindergarten, a day care, a health care clinic and adult convert classes for the local Japanese Canadian community. The Mission building was built in 1929. The house next door (right) at 385 E. Cordova was purchased in 1932 to provide additional space. That house is the oldest surviving house in Vancouver, built in the 1880’s. In 1942, the Sisters protested to the government against the relocation edict of the Canadian Japanese community. Their protests were unheeded, so the Sisters decided to leave the ministry in Japantown and to follow their community and set up schools in the internment camps. Those schools ran from 1942-49. After the war, few Japanese-Canadians returned to the Powell Street neighbourhood. The kindergarten and day care programs continued until 1993, when re-zoning brought about other priorities. Today, the Franciscan Sisters Benevolent Society is a non-profit charitable organization owned and operated by the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement, providing a free lunch program, and emergency food and clothing/supplies daily for hundreds of needy men. |
| Dales House | 1889 | Residential | 414 Alexander St, Vancouver, BC V6A | 49.283989 | -123.095139 | One of the oldest buildings in Vancouver, this home was built for T.J Dales in 1889. Alexander Street was the first part of the city to get piped water in 1889 and due to its proximity to the Hastings Mill, a residential area of substantial houses quickly followed. Alexander Street was a major residential street for Japanese pioneers, and this address housed Japanese tenants as early as 1911. In 1927, the home was purchased by Isokichi Yamazaki - evidence of the growing prosperity of the Japanese Canadian community in the 1920s which saw them move from predominantly tenants to property owners. This building is important for its era, size, scale, and rarity, the last of its kind in Vancouver. The archival photo of this house (left, circa 1890) is strikingly different from the structure remaining today, as the building’s high Victorian pediment and turret were both removed at some point. Despite these changes, and the fact that the house was raised and covered in asphalt shingles, it still stands testimony to the thriving residential past of Japantown. |
| Vancouver Japanese Language School | 1928 | Community | 475 Alexander St, Vancouver, BC V6A | 49.284117 | -123.093902 | The Vancouver Japanese Language School & Japanese Hall (VJLS-JH) was established in 1906, and began in a rental property on Alexander Street that was later destroyed by fire. As the community grew, many Japanese Canadians struggled to teach their children Japanese, and so in 1919 the school eliminated the general Canadian curriculum to focus on Japanese language instruction only. Children attended regular public schools in English and went to learn Japanese language after school. This Spanish-Mission Revival building was designed for the VJLS-JH in 1928 by Sharp & Thompson Architects to serve not only as a school but also as a cultural centre. From 1942-49, the VJLS-JH facilities were occupied by the Army. A portion of the complex was sold to pay for the maintenance of the Government occupied portion. In 1949, many members of the community fought to reopen the school, and in 1953, the unsold portion of the VJLS-JH property was returned to the Japanese Canadian community. Out of all the Japanese Canadian properties, cars, boats, homes, and businesses that were confiscated, the VJLS-JH stands alone as the only property to retain ownership during and after the internment. To this day, the VJLS-JH is dedicated to the learning and promotion of Japanese language, culture and arts. It is also the only municipally designated heritage building on Alexander Street. |