

PLACES THAT MATTER

RAISING AWARENESS
OF THE PEOPLE,
PLACES AND EVENTS
THAT HAVE SHAPED
VANCOUVER

LARWILL PARK 2026
PHOTO: RITVIKA S

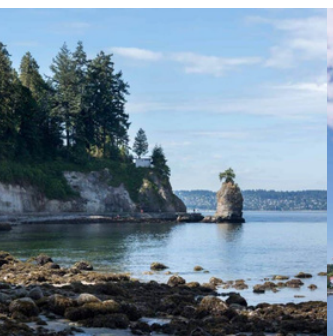
VANCOUVER
HERITAGE
FOUNDATION

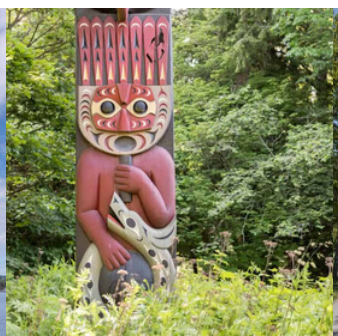
Vancouver Heritage Foundation recognizes the diverse histories and cultural heritage of Vancouver and that the city is located on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish) and səlilw̓ətaʔɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples.

Members of the Musqueam community selected five sites - c̓əsnaʔəm, sənáʔqʷ, sɬχiɬ̓əx, χʷay̓χʷəy̓ and spapəy̓əq to be marked with Places That Matter plaques in future. The history of the site in their words is shared on the PTM website.

The Places That Matter (PTM) project continues to work to include other sites of importance to the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish) and səlilw̓ətaʔɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples.

The PTM Community History Resource website shares historic context, current information and place names in həńq̓əmiń əḿ and Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Sníchim.







ABOUT VHF

Our mission is to advance the appreciation and conservation of our city's diverse heritage places and their stories. We raise awareness of the vital contribution that heritage makes to a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable community.

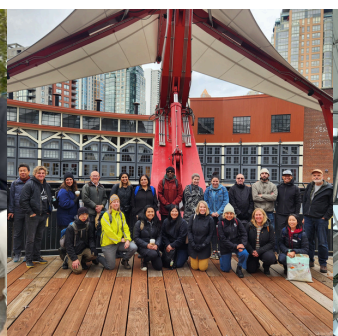
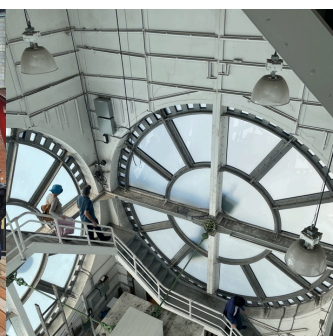
Vancouver Heritage Foundation was created as a not-for-profit society in 1992 and became a registered charity in 1996. Since 1998, VHF has been governed by a volunteer board of directors appointed by City Council. The day-to-day operations are run by a small team of dedicated employees.

VHF creates opportunities and resources to learn about Vancouver's history and heritage places, to celebrate and promote awareness of the unique and lesser known histories of the people, places, and events that have shaped Vancouver, and provides financial support for the conservation of historic buildings and sites.

Since its incorporation as a charitable organization in 1992, VHF has offered an array of fascinating programs and resources and has provided financial support through grants to homeowners, heritage professionals, authors, artists, teachers, students, and interested members of the community.

We offer a range of informative online resources including the Heritage Site Finder interactive map, the Places That Matter Community History Resource, and the Heritage Study Guide for Schools, as well as a wide range of resources on our website on the topics of Indigenous Heritage, Heritage House Styles, Places of Remembrance, Map Guides, and much more.



ABOUT PTM

Places That Matter raises awareness of the lesser-known people, places and events that have shaped Vancouver's history and strives to broaden public understanding of Vancouver's heritage and encourage further understanding and engagement with these places and their multi-layered histories.

As of 2026, over 100 PTM plaques have been physically installed throughout the City of Vancouver. While over 125 sites were submitted during the initial site selection process, only those that were feasible and had public support went forward with physical plaques. Independent sites have been added to the original nominations, on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of VHF and the Site Selection Committee.

Selected sites without physical plaques can still be found on the Community History Resource website with individual webpages. If you are interested in supporting any of the non-installed plaques, please email mail@vancouverheritagefoundation.org for more information.

If you are interested in supporting a nomination for a new Places That Matter plaque site, this document has been created to assist in understanding the expectations, community engagement and financial support required to begin the process. **All new sites must be nominated using the Site Nomination form on the PTM website.**



LABOR TEMPLE PLAQUE PRESENTATION 2026



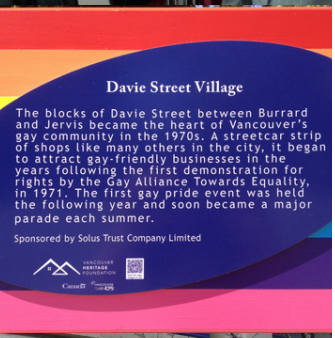
PHOTOS: ALIREZA DASHTI & VHF



HISTORY OF PTM









Places That Matter is a multifaceted community project launched for the 125th anniversary of the incorporation of the City of Vancouver (2010). In 2011, Vancouver Heritage Foundation asked the public to identify and nominate 125 sites commemorating people, places and events that have shaped the city. This grassroots, broad-based commemorative plaque project focuses on recognizing places, people and events that matter to Vancouverites and to broaden the scope of heritage places and their stories.

All nominations put forward by the public by March 16th were considered for a plaque. Public voting and a Site Selection Committee determined the initial selection list based on specific criteria. The Committee was comprised of a diverse group of local historians, artists, students, heritage consultants, writers and educators. VHF then set about engaging with site stakeholders for sponsorship support and public plaque presentations.

Since 2011, VHF has hosted over 100 plaque presentations. In 2016, we launched the Community History Resource website, an information-rich hub that expands on the original Places That Matter (PTM) plaque program. Each site has their own webpage exhibiting plaque text, historic research, oral histories, contemporary and historic photos, as well as opportunities for community contribution. In 2018, the first PTM Community Celebration invited the public to an evening of storytelling, table displays and food. Since then, VHF has continued to host events highlighting Places that Matter sites and connecting like-minded organizations, individuals and community groups.











BECOMING A PTM SITE



1. Nomination

A new site is suggested when a nomination form is submitted via the PTM website.

2. Site Review

VHF staff review the PTM Site Nomination Form within 2 weeks of submission.

3. Site Visit

VHF staff meet with nominator and other site stewards to discuss site viability and review existing knowledge.



4. Research

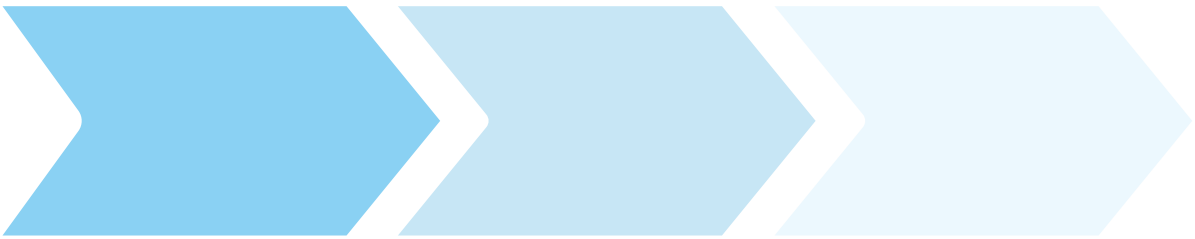
Additional information is sourced for the plaque text and website through consultation with community.

5. Sponsorship

Financial support for the plaque must be determined in advance before proceeding.

6. Event Planning

Details regarding timing, location and overall vision for the plaque presentations are discussed.



7. Plaque Event

The printed plaque is presented at a free community celebration.

8. Installation

The plaque is installed on site in the designated location.

9. Website

Information about the site, including community stories, are published on the website.

SITE SELECTION CRITERIA

The initial nomination process in 2011 asked the public to nominate a site in the City of Vancouver that was important to them (does not include University Endowment Lands). Due to the changing nature of the City, some PTM sites/plaques have been altered and some have been added to the list since the initial 125.

The below criteria is a blend of old and new, taking into consideration the guidance from the original site selection committee. As the project has grown, it has come to incorporate a broader site selection process, to allow us to continue to find lesser-known local histories and stories, and places of significance.

Potential PTM sites should:

- be within the City of Vancouver (COV) boundaries (this does not include UBC - University Endowment Lands)
- reflect a geographic spread in the city (strength of the site's values as well as location in the city that is under-represented)
- create awareness about little-known city history- be at least 20 years old
- not be connected to current political issues or controversies
- represent various communities present in the City
- be considered if already on the City of Vancouver's Heritage Register, for strength of community impacts to be shown (vs general built heritage value only)- a story not already widely known

Additional considerations include:

- Research already started on the general history of the place (timeline), consultation with various stakeholders, current owners, etc. (access to local archives, knowledge keepers etc.)
- Recognition of Indigenous connections to the site and acknowledging the intersections of other people, groups and organizations who may have different interpretation of or connections to the selected site.
- Sponsorship of the site in advance (current cost is $1,500)
- Approval of the plaque installation onsite (or offsite) in advance
- If already on the City of Vancouver's Heritage Register, the site will be assessed for strength of community impacts to be shown (vs general built heritage value only) - a story not already widely known

CRITERIA FOR SITES

Key Aspects of Site Research and Knowledge	First-Hand Connections	Secondary Information/Sources or Documents	Oral Histories/ Community Support
Research and Information: Within the City of Vancouver, over 20 years old, layers of site history (ie. Indigenous place names)			
Social Context: Do you know the neighbourhood histories, beyond your specific connections? What else about this site may be important to other groups, any conflicts, unresolved issues? Key points to your site nomination.			
Community Support: List all types of community supporters you have engaged with directly. What may be missing at this time?			
Financial or in-kind support: Who will support the sponsorship fee? In-kind support? Plaque event/ongoing support? research/site archive?			
Notes:			

PLAQUE SPONSORSHIP



Supporting the Places That Matter Project

Your sponsorship fee of $1,500 CAD per plaque covers a portion of the cost to maintain one plaque in perpetuity. For each plaque, VHF costs include research undertaken by historians and writers, project coordination and manufacturing of the plaque. Sponsorship of plaques help the VHF to sustain the cost of the program.

Sponsoring a plaque, whether it be related to the site that you (collective) are nominating, or if you chose to support a site without a current plaque, it allows VHF to devote the time and staff to:

- Assist in liaising with the site
- Conduct community research and archival searches
- Draft plaque text and liaise with stakeholders for edits and approvals
- Coordinate site installation
- Support the plaque presentation, including managing promotions, contacting media and arranging photography and/or videography for the event
- Oversee the installation of the plaque
- Create and maintain content for the site's webpage, including resources, images and community story submissions
- Offer continued engagement with the site and its stakeholders in annual events and programs
- Monitor and maintain of the plaque itself in case of issues
- And much more!

SERPAHIM JOE FORTES PLAQUE PRESENTATION 2022
PHOTO: ROB ATKINS

THE PLAQUE

The oval plaque measures 16.8 inches by 9.5 inches and is a digital print on a 1/8" diebond panel, a lightweight but robust material. East Van Signs, a local Vancouver company, is our producer. There is no material, like copper or brass, in the plaque that is worth stealing. It can be fixed to a building or site either by 100% polyurethane or by screws.

The Places That Matter website QR code is printed directly onto the plaque and takes the user directly to the homepage (www.placesthatmatter.ca) where further information and images about each site can be found.

Places That Matter is an independent plaque project that is not associated with the City of Vancouver's heritage building plaque project (triangles). There is no heritage protection or designation associated with the PTM plaques, but some site owners have recently added themselves to the COV Heritage Register after becoming at PTM site or have an interest in heritage conservation.

VHF owns the plaque and will replace it if it is damaged. Reprinting a plaque after installation to make edits to the text will incur costs. Building/site owners or caretakers agree to accept and install the plaque and approve the plaque text. The plaque will remain on the site for as long as all parties agree.

INSTALLATION

Depending on your site, all possible installation options will be explored. VHF will assist in determining who owns the property on which a plaque may be installed. Affixing it to an exterior location is preferred for public access but may require maintenance. Cooperation with other site owners may be required.

VHF will assist in this process and provide clear direction on what type of installation is recommended.



CELLAR JAZZ CLUB PLAQUE INSTALLATION

PLAQUE PRESENTATION

Once the plaque text and installation have been approved by all stakeholders, consider the following when planning a public plaque presentation:

- Is there a significant date or timing for the Places That Matter site?
- How do you envision the presentation event or gathering?
- Will it be indoors or outside? What space is suitable for the weather?
- Are there approvals needed for use of the space?
- Is there a cost to use the space? Sites are encouraged to provide in-kind support and allow public access the site for free during the event
- Who will represent the site and receive the plaque? Who will share their stories?
- Who will be invited?
- Will refreshments be provided?

VHF is happy to assist in liaising with various representatives as speakers or attendees at the plaque presentation. VHF Staff and Board of Directors will be in attendance to assist with the plaque presentation. The Mayor and City Council will be invited and may or may not have representatives in attendance.

VHF will assist in documenting the event through photography and basic video recording which will be made available after the event, for our records, for the website and for your use.



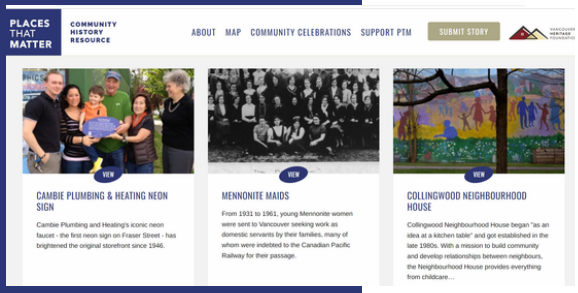
CHINA CREEK SKATE PARK 2022
PHOTO: ROB ATKINS

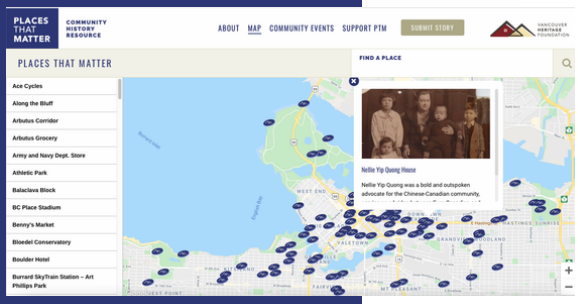


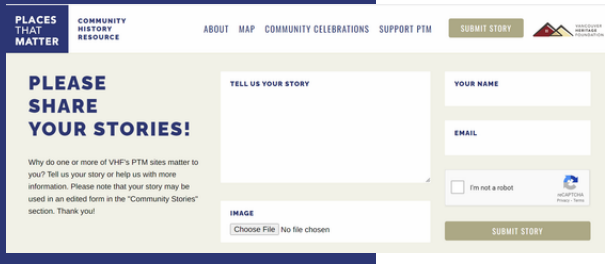
ARBUTUS GROCERY 2012
PHOTO: ALEX SALAVERI

PTM COMMUNITY HISTORY RESOURCE WEBSITE

An information-rich digital resource, this website brings together the layers of heritage at each Places That Matter site, sharing oral histories, archival and community materials, images, videos and educational resources.







The landing page highlights over 20 individual pages, which are curated throughout the year to connect with anniversaries or special history months. Users can search for the places from the home page or visit;

- The map page has a list with all current PTM sites (over 100), and users can hover over the sites on the map of Vancouver and click on the plaque icon for more information which takes ones directly to;

- Each PTM site's individual webpage by title which includes the following content: plaque text (if applicable), an main image, text, historical context, sources, links, video links, a photo gallery, and a location map. All sections are editable and updated as necessary.

- At the bottom of each webpage in the PTM Community History Resource website, a "Submit Your Story" form invites visitors to share a story, a comment and a photo which can then be added to the "Community Stories" section of the webpage for each individual site page.

BEYOND PLAQUES

The impact of Places that Matter extends far beyond the plaque and community history resource website.

From collaborations and venue partnerships to outreach and speaking opportunities, PTM has become a key pillar of the work VHF does and we continue to work with sites long after the plaque is presented and installed.





Places That Matter sites are invited to participate in the collaborative public programming VHF hosts during Heritage Week (the third week of February in BC). Bringing together like-minded organizations, individuals and community supporters, the PTM Community Fair helps to raise awareness for the project and showcases the sites through table displays, storytelling and more.

PTM sites are also invited to participate in events as venues and/or speakers, including Heritage Discovery Day.






PROJECT SUPPORT & RECOGNITION

In 2011, PTM was launched with a Celebrate 125 Grant from the Province of BC, and the first plaque presentation took place that fall.

In 2016, we launched the Places That Matter Community History Resource website, partially funded by the Heritage Legacy Fund for Awareness and Education projects by Heritage BC. Web developer, Split Mango also provided sponsorship.

In 2017, a Vancouver Historical Society Grant was awarded to complete content and research for 85 site pages on the website.

In 2019, PTM received a City of Vancouver Heritage Award of Honour for Education and Awareness and a Heritage BC Award of Honour for Education and Awareness.

A 2023 grant was received from the Vancouver Historical Study to create a PTM Study Guide for educators.

In 2026, PTM celebrated its 15th anniversary.



PTM COMMUNITY CELEBRATION 2023
PHOTO: KAMRAN SAFARI

THANK YOU!

For a full list of the individuals, organizations, charities and businesses that have supported this project through direct sponsorship, donations, in-kind donations and as volunteers, please visit our website.



www.placesthatmatter.ca

VANCOUVER HERITAGE FOUNDATION

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