Victoria Modern

Investigating Postwar Architecture and Design on Southern Vancouver Island

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Foreword

Christopher Thomas

Many accounts of Victoria's history leave the impression that the city was or less died on the eve of World War One, never to be revived. Writing in the 1970s, John Crosby Freeman said, "Since 1912, little of any great architectural conviction has appeared in Victoria." Readers familiar with, say, editorial cartoonist Len Norris's hilarious epigrams of Victoria society, many of them set amid potted palms in the lobby of the Empress Hotel (Figure 3), could be forgiven for wondering if the twentieth century bypassed Victoria, leaving behind nothing more than a fuddy-duddy, belatedly Victorian or Edwardian backwater "more English than the English." True, as principal deepwater port and provincial capital, the city was far more central to early British Columbia than it was after Vancouver emerged as the terminal city of rail and shipping in the 1880s and 90s. But to dismiss the significant, mid-sized urban metropole into which Victoria grew in the mid-to-late twentieth century is to seriously distort the historical record. It ignores, for instance, the fact that in a single decade, 1951-61, the population of the newly organized Capital Regional District ballooned by one-third—from 112,000 to over 150,000— and that in 1960 a newcomer's guide called Victoria the fourth fastest-growing city in Canada! To examine the physical and social form that growth took in the building, architecture, and planning of postwar Victoria is the purpose of the project Victoria Modern that this booklet inaugurates.

It is dangerous to announce that a project is being inaugurated: what if it fails to materialize? At the very least, we think, a worthwhile publication will have appeared that advertises to the transformation of Victoria and southern Vancouver Island in the postwar period. At best, a research/publication/exhibition project will catch fire that presents, in effect, a whole new picture of the region's history and, by extension, of its future growth.

This publication participates not only in local history but in a national and international conversation about the heritage of the Modern. Since the late 1980s a stream of publications on Canadian cities in the postwar era has appeared, with titles like Toronto Modern, Calgary Modern, and—closest to Victoria's case—the New Spirit: Modern Architecture in Vancouver. These are products of both a pronounced retro mood in culture generally—a yea for a simpler, imagined return to the world—and, in the case of building and architecture, of a worldwide recognition that vast numbers of sites and buildings, ranging from major landmarks to ordinary postwar housing estates, are threatened with demolition and are sure by early-twentieth-century projects that dwarf them in scale and capacity to generate revenues. It is a situation like that of the late 1960s and 70s, when waves of demolition of Victorian and Edwardian produced a heritage preservation movement on a scale not seen for over a century. This time it is the former villas—the Modern itself—that is endangered. In 1988, in Brandon, Holland, a group of architects and preservationists founded Docomomo (International Working Party for the Documentation and Conservation of the Modern Movement), an organization that has grown worldwide to forty-five countries and 2,000 members. Several Docomomo chapters or "working parties" have begun in Canada, including Docomomo BC, based in Vancouver, which was a partner in a research project leading to the appearance of this publication—a story told elsewhere. Victoria has not been immune to the sorts of losses that galvanized the founding of Docomomo.

Older residents will remember, for example, the interior of Munday's Time Shoes at 1203 Douglas Street (1947). More fortunate, perhaps, have been the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) at 1609 Blanshard Street, of 1951 (Figure 1), now a cafe with offices above; and the former Royal Trust Building— now the Mosaic, a condominium complex— at 1061 Fort Street, of 1962 (Figure 2). Both were designed by architect John Di Castri. Luckily, any number of buildings of the postwar era have been demolished, renovated unsympathetically, or preserved but only marginally. On Vancouver Island as elsewhere, public disarray, aggressive automobility, and new types and scales of neoliberal development have combined to force into crisis a dwindling number of products of the Modern Movement.
We hope this publication will focus attention on the crisis and, more broadly and positively, stimulate public appreciation of what remains in Victoria and on southern Vancouver Island from the postwar period—here considered to span 1945–75. Public awareness requires knowledge, so the booklet is intended to double as a primer on modernism in architecture and design, written within the local context. The essays discuss the history of Victoria Modern, our research methods, and a brief history of modernism in Canada. Though the essays show variety to give voice to differences among the team of researchers, the essays share a common point of view representing certain values. These values can be framed as pairs or dualities:

Elite/popular Universities, museums, and art galleries are often viewed by those outside them as alienating, highbrow institutions divorced from real life. Like the Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) program as a whole, which is described elsewhere, this team hopes to bridge that gap, while acknowledging our aim to exert influence on perceptions and policy in the wider community. On the other hand, academic writers have their own needs as well, which include the following of scholarly protocols ensuring accuracy and completeness. For that reason the essays come with reference notes, but we try to keep these short and unobtrusive, enough so as not to pose a distraction or annoyance to readers who have other purposes in mind.

Art/visual culture Since the 1960s, Art as a form of transcendent vision exercised by the—usually white and male—saintly genius has gone by the board, replaced by a notion of cultural production taking place within material conditions in communities marked by gender, race, class, and other axes of difference. Art is better seen as a cultural form as political as any other. Far from being dropped from on high on lowly “everyday folk,” artistic knowledge—like all knowledge—is transmitted upwards and downwards, in multiple directions, making it seem more like a web than a ladder. So...

Architect-designed/vernacular The project seeks to investigate the production of vernacular or popular forms of modernist design along with the work of professionally trained and accredited architects, interior designers, and landscape architects. The idea is not to downgrade these professions, but to view the work they produce as embedded in a wider visual culture spanning the range from architect-designed homes in The Uplands (figure 4), to architectural furnishings for modern interiors (figure 3), to items of popular culture sold off-the-shelf in the chainstores of postwar shopping centres. As will be explained, particular study has been given to the housing subdivision of Topaz Heights, built 1946–47 in the block formed by Tolmie Avenue, Finlayson, Quadra, and Blanshard Streets (figures 11 to 14). The small but attractive houses of Topaz, set amid lawns facing curved and sloping streets, embodied a family ideal of the postwar baby boom period, yet they were built for modest profit by a housing corporation to type-designs developed by an architect not yet identified.

Serious/playful The stereotype of the humourless professor looking out over reading glasses on a reverent audience of undergraduates is not the tone Victoria Modern hopes to project! Still, we have serious pedagogical goals: to increase understanding of building and life in postwar Victoria and appreciation for the remains of the period. But solemnity is not in order. Amusing, ironic—sometimes plain funny—pects of life in baby boom families, everyday dramas of loss, worry, and marital and intergenerational conflict, and the amusing yet maddening pretensions of scientifically-trained experts talking down to citizens and residents are themes we hope to capture by means of a more holistic treatment of architecture. The period under review was, as a recent movie title puts it, “far from heaven,”” but people muddled through, often grateful for material blessings they had not known before.

Past/future Though Victoria Modern seeks to describe a state of affairs that was in the past, it has implications for what will be. Change is constant, but
we sense that the present moment is unusually dynamic and promising for Victoria and the island—a period when older vistas are being rethought and new possibilities can emerge. An example is the planning process called Downtown Victoria 2020, a continuing project inaugurated by conferences held in November 2003 and March 2004. This activity may in turn present an opportunity to begin some form of architectural or urban design program at the University of Victoria. Understanding Victoria’s postwar development may be a key to aspects of planning its future. So, this publication represents more than an appeal to preserve remnants of the postwar heritage; it is an invitation to see the city and region in a different way than previously, one that can shift decisions made in the next decades.

**Complete/incomplete** In the past, scholarly research has often professed to finality and completeness, for closure seemed to guarantee comprehensiveness. The scholar’s goal was the definitive treatment of a given subject. Here, driven both by conviction and by necessity, we consciously try to avoid that pretension by adopting a method called “Action Research,” defined by one practitioner as “a process by which change and understanding can be pursued at the one time... with action and critical reflection taking place in turn.” A kind of feedback loop, Action Research is further described in relation to our project on page 22. Moreover, a publication normally documents a project already complete; this publication, rather, is a signpost to future activities.

Other qualities and values animate the project, but these suffice to catch its flavour. Up to this point, Victoria Modern represents a vision rather than a fixed reality. Asking ourselves what research process would embody these values and respond to our goals, the team has adopted a mission statement, initially proposed by Martin Segger:

> Victoria Modern is projected as a multifaceted research, publication, exhibition, and events program over a five-year period at UVic... The object is to document and explicate the rise of modernism as an aesthetic and social phenomenon in the planned and built landscape of Greater Victoria, and further to enable a dialogue with its legacies. As well as examining the critical postwar period, 1945–75, the project will address the impacts of this foundational period in the urbanization of Victoria and current local planning and design principles.

**A History (so far) of Victoria Modern**

As the introduction explains, both an appreciation of design (including architecture) of the recent past and a perception of that design as heritage have emerged in the 1990s and 2000s, stimulated no doubt by the fresh popularity of neo-modernism in current design (figures 6 and 7). In the specific context of UVic, however, Victoria Modern extends a long tradition of community-based architectural studies, a tradition explained in the following account by Martin Segger.

**Fig 6 The Railyards, all Yale Road, Victoria West. Himon Bullock; Boniface Haden, architects (Vancouver). 2003. A large development, like Saltair Waterfront, but less unified, the new building on the Victoria West shore provides another opportunity to explore neo-modernist ideas.**

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[Image 0x0 to 1224x792]
The University and the Community  Martin Segger

In 1965 the University of Victoria recruited one of Canada's preeminent pioneer architectural historians, Dr. Alan Gowans (figure 8), to found a department of art or material-culture history, which he (for ideological reasons) called History in Art. The early syllabus of studies was based on three streams of specialization: one for academic art historians, a second intended as pre-architecture to prepare students for professional studies, and a third to accommodate curatorial specialization for those seeking museum careers. From the outset Gowans attracted a cadre of scholars-teachers in the rapidly expanding discipline of architectural history, including Professor John Crosby Freeman, a specialist in the Arts and Crafts movement who also developed the decorative arts collections of the Malwood Art Museum & Gallery, and Professor Richard Grooms, a Toronto-trained modernist who also taught three-dimensional design in Visual Arts. English medievalist Dr. Richard Morris and Islamicist Dr. Anthony Welch also joined the department during these years. To expand the range of course offerings of the small department, Gowans developed a summer institute, which attracted major scholars for credit sessions. The scholarly visitors included Harold Jasnow (author of the celebrated History of Art, several editions), Princeton architectural historian E. Baldwin Smith (The Dome, a Study in the History of Ideas), and English scholars of the Renaissance Peter and Linda Murray (Art of the Renaissance and A Dictionary of Art and Artists). Another academic visitor Gowans invited was a specialist in American architecture based at the University of Michigan, Dr. Leonard K. Eaton, the author of books on Frank Lloyd Wright, Howard Van Doren Shaw, and Jens Jensen. Eaton returned to U Vic over many years, and his students established a base of research on Victoria architects Samuel McMurdo and Francis Haskin Rattenbury.

About 1968, Gowans, with a research assistant, Kathleen Porter, started a street-by-street survey of Victoria's built heritage, which formed a foundation for the city's pioneering civic heritage conservation program. By the early 60s civic officials, under Mayor Richard Biggs and Wilson, a human dynamo, had grasped the value of Victoria's unusually complete historic building-stock to its tourism and civic identity and had embarked on a surgical renewal of the downtown core that would be in harmony with the remains from older periods. The Gowans-Porter campaign extended those aims to the residential districts around downtown. About the same time, architect Peter Cutten was instrumental in founding the Building Revival Coalition, an early preservation society. Owing largely to these efforts in Victoria, the provincial government passed one of the first historic-preservation acts in Canada, enabling the creation of a civic heritage advisory committee. Anxiety at the demolition (to build highrises) of historic homes on the hill east of downtown and in James Bay also led, in 1973, to the creation of the Hallmark Society, the premier—if no longer largest—preservation society in B.C. The founding in 1984 of the Cultural Resource Management Program within the Department of History in Art built on the department's architectural history specialty and added a career-development stream focused on heritage conservation. So, in its early decades, the university's and the city's efforts were in synchrony, something the current project seeks to revive. To date, however, Victorian and Edwardian design has received almost all of the attention of preservationists in the city (figure 9).

In the course of the residential survey, Porter discovered the existence of the Samuel McMurdo papers, an architectural archive that documented one of the city's early and influential practitioners. Acquired for study by the Department of History in Art in 1968, the archive is now held jointly by the Malwood Art Museum & Gallery and the Special Collections division of the McPherson Library. Over time the collection has grown to include other biographical collections, for instance the sketchbooks and diaries of late-nineteenth-century Capilano architect Richard Riddell Rayne and the La Huc papers recording the work of one of Shanghai's most successful architectural offices between the two world wars. All these collections have been the subject of MA theses and exhibitions at the University's Malwood Art
The Capital

Rockland mansion hotbed of debate

Museum & Gallery. The object of the current research project is to extend this activity to the architecture and building of postwar Victoria and southern Vancouver Island, a body of work now in its turn seen as needing and being worthy of re-evaluation and preservation.

All the teachers named here used Victoria's urban landscape as a laboratory of teaching and research. Janson walked his students around the city looking for Classical and Renaissance decorative details on downtown Victorian façades; Morten's students scammed Victoria's Gothic Revival churches; Eaton's did coursework based on blueprints and plans in the MacLure papers. The tradition continues: besides co-authoring architectural histories of Victoria and its university, Martin Segger has given numerous historic tours of the city, a practice Chris Thomas also took up after arriving in Victoria in 1992. The most recent such tour was a joint outing by Chris, Martin, Helen Edwards, Dorothy Mindenhall (a History in Art graduate), and Dr. Larry McCann of the Geography department to members of the U.S. Society of Architectural Historians on a two-day visit to Victoria and the Sooke Peninsula in April 2005, held after their annual meeting in Vancouver. The tour included such modernist sites as the Alhambra house and gardens on Fairfield Road and residential streets in the Uplands.

Victoria Modern therefore fits well within the university's long-standing specialization in architectural studies that combine academic teaching, mentored studies, and practical community-based research. Here, Chris Thomas takes over again to write about more recent developments.

Recent Community-Based Research Christopher Thomas

Martin's passage clarifies the continuity between the project inaugurated here and directions previously pursued at the university. What is new is the attention to the material culture of the postwar period. The attention was marked enough by 1997 that a special committee (of members and non-members) was struck by the Victoria chapter of the Architects Institute of British Columbia (AIBC) to take stock of “Victoria’s contemporary architecture.” That effort resulted in the production of a provisional inventory of modernist landmarks in Victoria by Martin Segger, based on his research for Exploring Victoria’s Architecture, published the previous year, and a plan for an exhibition on the subject to be held, jointly, by the university’s Melwood Art Museum & Gallery (where Segger directs) and the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, now undergoing a period of renewal. The activity of this “Mod Squad” was the subject of a leading article in the Times Colonist that fall (Figure 10). To some degree, the inspiration for a local exhibition was the New Spatial book and show just produced by UBC scholar Rhodri Windsor-Lewis for the Vancouver Art Gallery and the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montréal. That book and exhibition documented and hi-storicated Vancouver’s modernist heritage. While acknowledging the excellence of that project, we were convinced that the history of modernism on Vancouver Island was a degree independent of that of the lower mainland, with a validity of its own that merited study. Adding urgency to these efforts was our awareness that the postwar generation of architects was aging and moving toward retirement. Then, in November 1997, John H. Wada, one of this city’s leading postwar architects, died. As the 1990s ended a sense was palpable that all the pieces were available for an important research project but that assembling these into an active, coherent whole required a guiding structure still to be identified.

Two things occurred in 2000 to break the logjam surrounding studies of postwar modernism. One was the inauguration of a Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) based in UVic’s Department of History in Art. CURAs were then being started across Canada under a new program developed and funded by the Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) to bring together the research capacity of university units with the needs of small, local organizations which, because of chronic underfunding, often lacked resources to conduct research. For their part, universities could benefit from the CURA program by having access to new research materi-
Researching Topaz Heights Beth Macdonald

Little did I realize in September 2002 that photographing the modest houses in Topaz Heights (figures 11 to 14) for a History in Art seminar would lead to being involved in producing a museum exhibition based [in part] on local oral history. My main interest is religion and art; but these little houses, the stories of the early residents of Topaz, and the research process won me over.

Further to Chris's introduction, let me elaborate. Topaz Heights is a development of 101 houses built in 1946-47. They were designed as moderate-cost rental housing to accommodate families consisting of returned veterans, their wives, and at least one child (figure 11). The development was built by Housing Enterprises of Canada Ltd. (HECL), a limited-dividend company mandated and ninety-percent financed by the federal government and operated by insurance companies, which supplied the remaining ten percent of the funds. HECL built 3,313 units in twenty-four cities across Canada beginning in 1946. Owing to rising costs of materials and labour, HECL was unable to generate even the modest five percent profit it was allowed and so discontinued operations. Its developments were taken over in 1947 by the Central Mortgage & Housing Corporation (later renamed Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation). Some of this we learned during the course of the seminar, in September to December 2002, and some in drabs and drabs later.

The Hallmark Society provided me and my classmates with our first two research leads: the generic name—Glasgow subdivision, and its era of
... but it was a difficult time for building and the program founded on lack of patience and persistence in dealing with the adjustments to postwar conditions. This was, I think, a tragedy. Canada’s housing history might have been very different if there had been a strong input to fill the gap between public housing and the middle-class homeowner suburbs. Housing Enterprises folded up and, a few years later, its property was absorbed by CMHC. It was one of the heroic postwar ideas that didn’t come off.

Humphrey Corvan, Compassionate Landscape: Places and People in a Man’s Life (Toronto & Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 80.

construction—the years immediately following World War Two. As individuals, pairs, and groups, and depending on our various interests, we began to explore historical records in the city archives, the city’s Planning Department, the B.C. Archives, microfilmed newspaper files, and public and research libraries, about the people and physical fabric of the neighbourhood. At first glance the small, pleasant-looking houses of Topaz did not seem to be of much interest—except to Chris Thomas! But research carried out during the seminar and intermittently in the three years since has proven otherwise.

Three significant things about the development have emerged for us. First, Topaz Heights is unique in Victoria’s residential housing as the first postwar neighbourhood built as a planned project, with environmental features ensuring enclosure and a common demographic makeup (figure 12). Second, Topaz was part of a national project prompted by the postwar housing crisis. That project reflected a shift in government housing policy, changes in mortgage arrangements, and broad acceptance of a notion of housing as a social good. While there is some awareness of the activity in our contemporary, Wartime Housing Limited,19 Housing Enterprises of Canada Ltd., itself, is little known. Third, a distinct rupture in architectural modes to follow modernist design principles—evident especially in the hipped and shed roof models at Topaz Heights (figure 13)—represents a daring, perhaps original exploration of an idiom more often associated with housing types of the American Pacific Northwest and California coastline.

A few members of the Hallmark Society, drawn by our own enthusiasm, attended the seminar as we proceeded to report on our findings. In the first presentation, Marie Hukalo and I identified the house types, their locations, and the general neighbourhood layout. This was followed by reports by Ciosele Courteau, Alan Brooks, Erin Coulson, and Carla Torson on their research at city hall into floor plans and house alterations and on their research process. Rebecca Croswell struggled particularly hard, and in the end succeeded in finding information about the agency behind the development, HECL. Other presentations added information on social history, history of the area, interior decorating, and the effects of the automobile. Memorably, Marlow Roberts, who had studied clothing worn in the era, made her presentation in the costumed persona of a young fifties housewife who recounted her daily life and served up her presentation with chocolate chip cookies.20

What might have fulfilled the mandate of other seminars only led to more curiosity in ours. Professor Chris Thomas, amazed at the amount and content of the collected research, asked one day if anyone was interested in continuing with the study. Alan Brooks and I, part of the city hall research team, were. So we did a directed study in spring 2002 under Chris and Professor Martin Segger, director of the Malwood Art Museum & Gallery, with the aim of developing an exhibition proposal. Our exhibit would be titled "Topaz Heights: The Living House." Somehow, the smallish floor dimensions of the typical Topaz house (figure 14)—twenty-seven by twenty-seven feet—seemed just small enough to suggest some kind of transformation into the Malwood gallery space. Perhaps drawing on the performance research of Marlow Roberts described above, the idea of recreating the physical experience of living in the homes would allow us to evoke what Alan dubbed...
"the living house." This meant shifting focus from the museum-standard display of factual narration, to which our initial research in newspaper records, archives, and libraries had conformed. No longer was this quite what we wanted; we were gravitating toward a more experiential mode of presentation.

The directed study with myself and Alonso led to a public request for information, which to our surprise harvested an overwhelmingly positive response from early residents of Topaz and their families. It was clear from questionnaires and several oral interviews that the families loved these houses and had lasting memories of living in them. One early-resident couple who sold their home returned to Victoria later, regretting they had ever sold the house, they purchased another in the development and live in it to this day! Stories such as this, and others told about the lives lived within these houses, recontextualized a more imaginative and responsive proposal for an exhibition about Topaz Heights: one going beyond our experiential display concept. Our understanding of the houses began to include sociological and psychological conditions in addition to material and descriptive qualities.

Wanting to share our progress with local residents, in September 2003 we hosted a Saturday afternoon tea party for them to thank them for support, share research to date, and ask them to lend objects to the proposed exhibition (then imagined to take place in 2004-05). Held in the lobby and lecture hall of UVic’s Fine Arts Building, the tea party featured a display of photographs, floor plans, and other materials drawn from our research and included oral presentations by Chris and myself on our activity to date. Among other things, the occasion offered older residents a chance to mingle with former neighbours (figure 16). The residents’ possessions and stories have in a sense become part of the architecture, the houses involved embodying reflections of individual families as well as generalities of the families’ times. I was struck, for example, by the Ireland’s tale of their parents’ most expensive wedding present—a vanity chair worth fifteen dollars that still retains its original cover.

Our project continued to germinate and grow. In summers 2003 and 2004, Karen Waugh, a History student hired under the Summer Career Placement and (Federal) Young Canada Works programs, joined us to assist with research on Topaz Heights and related topics. Karen’s work included searching newspapers and other archives for specific information and photographs and for contextual data on modernity and its materialization in architecture around Victoria and the adjoining Island. Karen also conducted interviews with key architects, and soon we began to understand a wider context—an urban plan—to which Topaz Heights contributed. In early 2004 our research team expanded to include Christopher Iffler, a Canadian who has studied in Australia and is an expert on architectural theory and curatorial programming. Without (I suspect) quite knowing how or when, Christopher assumed his natural role as project manager, joining that to his fascination with postwar architecture and design. Under his influence, the Topaz Heights exhibit grew and divided into a range of additional exhibitions on Centennial Square and the architects involved in Victoria’s mid-century urban reconfiguration. That configuration underlies Victoria Modern in the form outlined here.

Also during summer 2004, I was fortunate to receive funding from SSHRC/UBC and the McMichael Art Museum & Gallery to research other housing developments built by HECI in Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, and Regina. Perhaps, I thought, the findings would place Topaz Heights in the context of a national scheme and maybe even reveal the name of the architect(s) behind the houses of Topaz. What I did find was that the design of the houses in the prairie cities was a variation on styles practised by Twentyfibre Housing Ltd—cottage and Cape Cod images. So far, it appears that Victoria’s designs are unique (figure 14).

The year 2004-05 has been promising yet frustrating for Victoria Modern. An application for support for the Topaz exhibition that we submitted in the fall to the Canada Council for the Arts was turned down, with the result that by January 2005 it seemed wise to postpone our proposed exhibition until adequate resources are available. We are already at work on another application to the same program for filing this fall. Despite the obstacles, I remain enthusiastic about the work for several reasons. I am a child of the era to which Topaz Heights belongs and identify with its residents. Those residents are so enthusiastic about the lives they lived there that in addition, I believe more attention should be paid to architecture, not only to big, award-winning landmarks but to the everyday buildings in which we spend eighty-five percent of our lives—living, working, and doing the shopping. In this sense, architecture is like the
air we breathe—everywhere around us but seldom noticed. Although (as Chris Thomas explains) the thought of an exhibition on modern architecture in the Victoria region has been in the air for some time amongst academics and design professionals—especially since the production of a website on the subject, hosted by the Matwood Art Museum & Gallery, based on research done under a collaborative CURA grant with Decamoso.be—it has been our focused research on Topaz Heights that continues to give concrete form to the general impulse. Setbacks have occurred along the way, but in the end these offer us an opportunity, here, to structure a much more significant, longer-term project on Victoria’s built environment, in the past and into the future.

Beth’s animated account of the history of the Topaz Heights project brings us up to date in describing the planning for Victoria Modern. Together with an aspiration to produce other exhibitions, publish interviews with the architects of postwar Victoria, and promote the preservation of what remains of the modernist era—buildings, interiors, landscapes, and architectural records—the plan for an exhibit on Topaz Heights suggests the breadth of the vision that underpins the project. In what has been written so far, much knowledge of the postwar era is assumed on readers’ part; something that is perhaps unfair. Also, a good deal has been said about Victoria, but not much about the cultural system or context of which the city was part in the 1940s to the 70s. What do “Modernism” and “modernity” mean? Why did the ideas they represent assume particular importance in the period under study? Was Victoria unique in these respects, or were the same ideas pursued in other cities and regions? Why does that matter today? To answer such questions the essays beginning page 26 are included; but, first, we think a word on the approach to research taken so far in Victoria Modern—and to be taken in future—is in order.

Method: Action Research

Christopher Leffer

This publication, along with the proposed exhibitions and public programming to be conducted under the umbrella term Victoria Modern, have been developed through an approach to scholarly activity known as “Action Research.” As researchers, curators, and educators, we have sought to produce some significant change to traditional exhibition formats, studies in architectural history, and—most significantly—the manner in which a public audience and a university can be drawn into a meaningful learning relationship. We hope that such a method of research and action will facilitate leadership as well as learning for the communities within and beyond the university. It can be noted here with some humor that, had it not been for the unexpected loss of public funding on the eve of initiating our production schedule for an exhibition in 2005, our current method may not have been taken up so consciously. Being forced to return to the drawing board allowed us to realize with some enthusiasm the opportunity to formally acknowledge our academic research practice, and embrace its benefits—primarily, that a project rooted in a continuing exchange of ideas and information with a community is strengthened by change, rather than stifled. Instead of proceeding with a reapplication for exhibition funding, we agreed to slow our process down and take a second look at what was motivating us in the first place. In this way we have been able to take stock of the project’s accomplishments and failures as they have occurred. Most importantly, we can now take smaller steps and present evidence of our findings, such as this publication, as we proceed together through the bigger project of understanding Victoria’s relationship to twentieth-century architecture.

It is the freeing flexibility of working with change rather than against it that has brought Action Research into the favourable light it has enjoyed in diverse fields of academic study—and which has made it most welcome in this project. In retrospect, our survey across the meeting minutes, copious research notes, lists of past and future activities, descriptions of courses offered at the university, transcripts of interviews with residents and architects, and the demonstration of creative commitment brought by public and institutional collaborators to “Topaz Heights: The Living House”—the title of the proposed exhibition to be held at the university’s Matwood Art Museum & Gallery—quickly indicated to us that this has indeed not been a project of delivering material, historical findings to an uninterested audience. Rather, it has been an active social engagement with a community broadly inclusive of academics as well as homeowners, students, architecture professionals, and many others. So what is “Action Research” and how might it
Diagram of Cyclical Pattern of Action Research

Identify initial idea and stakeholders
- Gather data to describe first level of detail
  - Interpret evidence to design organization of data
  - Equipment and processes of design with stakeholders
- Evaluate successes and failures of the field response testing
- Amend plan to account for failures
- Gather data to describe second level of detail
- Continue through cycle

Samples from our Research Method

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<td>Dr. Christopher Thomas notices interesting features while walking the dog in a residential area of Victoria.</td>
<td>Topaz Heights, as it turns out, is a significant postwar housing project conceived through social, economic, and architectural ideologies of modernity.</td>
<td>A research seminar on Topaz Heights is offered by Dr. Thomas at the University of Victoria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar student Beth Macdonald identifies herself with the Topaz Heights project as she conducts research for Dr. Thomas’s seminar on twentieth-century architecture.</td>
<td>The research seminar investigates for Beth Macdonald a personal engagement with the neighborhood and her own history, through a study of architectural connections in the working-class lives of the postwar family.</td>
<td>Learning is mutual and shared in the context of research through directed studies with Dr. Thomas—many residents are longtime owners of their homes and welcome the interview process. Architecture is perceived as a living process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The project team realizes that the architectural composition of Victoria is often perceived as part of the postwar century while excluding prolific examples of modernity in the postwar period.</td>
<td>Informed by poststructural theories of philosophy from Europe, modernist is seen as a complex, historical moment—beyond a single narrative. How does Topaz Heights participate in a history of modernism and architecture in Victoria and how can this research be disseminated?</td>
<td>A partnership is made with Documenta 18 and CUBA, which lend support to a formal presentation of Topaz Heights. The exhibition space is viewed by the public, including a community of architecture in contrast to professional design practice and presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth Macdonald organizes a tea party for homeowners of Topaz heights, at which time further stories and interpretations of the community are received.</td>
<td>The curatorial process is reimagined to consider an unorthodox approach to representing architecture in a manner in contrast to professional design practice and presentation.</td>
<td>The exhibition space is conceived of as a public meeting space—one which continues the active production of knowledge concerning Topaz Heights while simultaneously interpreting other aspects in a historical fashion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition funding is applied for through the Canada Council for the Arts, but the proposal is unsuccessful.</td>
<td>The effect of modernity in Victoria is substantial enough to warrant a longer-term multifaceted research and architectural project looking to the past, the present, and the future.</td>
<td>Victoria Modern is conceived as a five-year interdisciplinary project to promote the modern history of Victoria through an exhibition, publication, film, seminars, and other public programming.</td>
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relate to our project on modern architecture in Victoria. Action Research encompasses a spiral of activity and inquiry shared between observers and their subject of research (Figures 15 to 17). It might begin with an observation which is then tested or informed by new information from the subject, which in turn refocuses the observation and the questions it raises. Preparation for the proposed exhibition “Topaz Heights: The Living House” furnished many examples of the workings of such feedback, a number of which appear in the archive table at the end of this section. For instance, Beth Macdonald organized a tea party for the residents of Topaz Heights, as an appreciative gesture for their participation in formal interviews. As it happened, during the event (held in September 2003), several more anecdotes and revelations were prompted by the non-academic context of a social activity. This information was then used to develop further research regarding Topaz Heights. Similarly, artefacts to be included in the exhibition have come forth from some of the residents, and these in turn have generated new curatorial narratives for the museum space. This active engagement with the area of research and the social or human potential for learning, creating, and developing upon what emerges in observation or reflection, offers an exciting challenge to the notion of a closed canon of knowledge. This challenge, we hope, will be illuminated in the exhibition that will form part of Victoria Modern.
A Vocabulary of International Style Modernism: Cowichan District Hospital (Duncan)  
Christopherister

1967 Townley & Matheson & Associates, architects

Ribbon Windows
Building mass is constructed on a grid of all steel or concrete, creating rectangular bays with and new emphasis on the aesthetic of an industrial relationship through materials and transparency.

Pilots
"Pilots" are building off the ground support piers which present the image of an industrialized architecture from something unexpected by history, so something translated is simply inevitable.

Sun Shades
The translation of the sun is reduced from the sun from the sun from a window that becomes another new experience in a technological envelope. It is then reduced to an extension of the envelope through shadow play cast on the windows and wall.

White Surface
Supposed to be a blank canvas, all ornamentation and detail have been removed from the building. All the wall is a clean space upon which can be extended an auditor and functional details designed in a minimal composition.

Abstract Art
White art is used. It is generally abstract or realistic. It is not designed to be a statement on a surface or window, but is a design expression of the context. It is used as a blank canvas upon which can be extended an auditor and functional details designed in a minimal composition.

Orthogonal Mass, Plane & Line
Particularly with internal soil, symmetry is used. It is a rational use and light and air expand the facade with efficiency and mass production of twentieth-century industrialization, while maintaining at the same time the overall composition.

Material Expression
These sheets, steel, glass, and glazed block are used in combination, not in isolation, but to function as themselves and not concealing other elements, like plates, form, and materials itself.

Functional Expression
Materials and massing define the form of the building and spaces, not individual or architectural expression. The buildings are not used comprehensively, but to allow for right for services.

Composite Mapping
Mapping is often used to define floor and roof planes, and structural expression is evident throughout the building and space. It is used to allow for direct expression of the building and space.

Automotive Provision
In Cowichan's Villa Scuba (1972-1974), Walter introduced the automobile as an appendage in the "machine for living". The car was to be a long, flat, unobtrusive element, yet have the convenience of the automobile in a living environment.
Modernist Architecture and Planning: Clarity and Caution

What Was Modernism?  Christopher Thomas

The arrival after World War Two of places like Victoria of a daring modern architecture from Europe and the United States startled those who saw it for the first time, and a mixture of curiosity, anger, puzzlement, and distress in the face of new aesthetic modes became a literary and graphic staple (figure 18). Newspapers and magazines had a heyday with the theme of the reception—even the comprehension—of modern art and architecture.28 British musical comedies Flanders & Swann, hugely popular in English Canoe in the early sixties, sent up the radical new design in their hilarious music hall number "Design for Living": "We've planned an uninhabited interior décor,/Curtains made of straw,/We've wallpapered the roof!/We don't know if we like it, but at least we can be sure/There's no place like home sweet home."29 Mrs. Logan Mayhew, whose family in 1950-51 built one of the earliest modern houses in Victoria (figure 4), says the biggest nuisance her family faced was crowds of wide-eyed gawkers, out on Sunday drives in family automobiles, who stopped on Beach Drive to stare and poke fun at the construction project. The family eventually built a high board fence around the property for the sake of privacy.30 Though they would have denied it, contemporary architects clearly hoped to create sanitation, and a photo like that in figure 1 suggests how well they succeeded.31

Since, it seemed, most people thought the new architecture had dropped from Mars, how did the unlikely mode develop, and how had it landed on Vancouver Island? The story used to be easier to tell than it is today. Formalist architectural historians of the 1950s or 60s could recite a canon of world-renowned predecessors—Art Nouveau, Pietro Belluschi, Le Corbusier, De Stijl, the Bauhaus, Russian Constructivism, the International Style (hearing Frank Lloyd Wright, who could not be readily accommodated, off onto a "genius"-siding), Neo-Brutalism, Late-Modernism, Postmodernism—with the implication that, of course, Modernism eventually reached Victoria and drove all before it. History had destined that.32 But teleological (goal-oriented) explanations are no longer acceptable, and the history of modernism has been "problematized" in directions of greater conflict and complexity. Now, the standard canon seems to fail to account for actual events in their messy flux, and scholars commonly speak, in the plural, of modernisms.33 There is, for example, architecture that simply is modern in virtue of its date and kind, but not its aesthetic. The house in figure 19, a few doors from where the Topaz Heights subdivision begins, was built (probably in the 1920s) with an up-to-date kitchen, bathroom, and other amenities, and with a basement accommodating a garage for a Model T. But that was an exterior in conformity to the strong tradition in B.C. of domestic design in an Arts and Crafts vein, which itself looked to British vernacular sources. Such vaguely English-looking houses were built everywhere on southern Vancouver Island in the years between the wars. Obviously, the 1920s builders and purchasers of such houses thought it more important that they be modern than that they look Modern. Yet there is another architecture, most frequent after World War Two, that we could call modernist—or, in upper case, Modernist—for the dramatic, dogmatic way it asserts its novelty, in its appearance and, sometimes, its structural principles (figures 1, 2 and 4). That is the architecture we seek to draw attention to here.

Which raises the more basic question, What is architecture? In the 1940s British architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner could confidently assert, "A bicycle shed is a building; Lincoln Cathedral is a piece of architecture."34 But the vernacular studies movement in architecture has rendered that
distinction, which once seemed so easy, problematic. Clearly, many postwar buildings in Victoria, especially houses, were not designed by architects—the do-it-yourself tradition was and is strong in British Columbia—yet many appear modernistic nonetheless, sometimes just because such houses are plain and unornamented. Are we to exclude these from the category of "modern"? Here we prefer to cast a wide net and to take a variety of kinds and cases seriously. What this means, though, is that no single account of modernism, including the resume that follows, can claim to be more than partial and approximate. In western culture the idea that we live in a modern age, distinct from earlier ones, emerged in what is now common (for that reason) to call early modern Europe, in the cultural flowering known as the Renaissance. The sense of living in a new age with an open, uncharted future quickened in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, which was marked by advances in transport, industry, and political organization. By the mid-nineteenth century forward-thinking architects imagined whole building systems exploiting a vast range of new, industrially produced materials—plate glass, iron worked in a variety of ways and later steel, concrete (poured, reinforced, and in blocks), and new ceramic products. These novel systems, even if not yet quite realizable, would serve the new "publics" and the building types these called into being: office buildings, department stores, railway stations, huge churches, theatres, and opera halls, mass communal dwellings, and so on. The professional architect, with a specialized education and certification from the state and/or professional peers, needed to design and build such structures was largely on invention of the nineteenth century.

Rapid change did not immediately produce an architecture that looked new, however. Until long after 1900, producers and audiences in western countries favoured modes that resembled the new or much-altered building types in recognizable historical styles. In fact, traditional aesthetics probably made the new realities they embodied palatable. Much Victorian architecture (1837–1901), though radically modern in many ways (e.g., the introduction of electricity and indoor plumbing), was remarkably profluse in ornament, especially neo-medieval ornament devised by the period's intense style revivals (figure 20). In the twentieth century, the 1920s and the 70s and 80s saw waves of historicizing architecture, especially in home design, where rehashing traditionalism—signalled by such features as chimneys and hearths, pitched roofs, and multi-pane windows—is often valued. The impact of Arts-and-Crafts imagery on home design in B.C., vividly represented by Samuel MacLure's work of the 1890s to the 1920s, is an example (figure 21).

By about 1905, though—fuelled by the slightly earlier Art Nouveau movement—a widespread impetus toward modernism could be seen in the design of many countries. Unlike its predecessors, the avant-garde of 1900–1930 went out of its way to draw attention to the modernity of its work. Advanced continental European architects drove design to extremes of factory-like simplicity that were not often seen till after World War Two in North America, whereas, instead, innovation tended to focus on the design of private homes (figure 22). Formal and spatial experiments conducted early in the century by American architect Frank Lloyd Wright and his sympathizers led to the development of the postwar suburban ranch and split-level home. Wright's "organic" imagery and his skill in deploying natural-looking materials resonated powerfully on the Pacific Coast, where, adapted to milder climates and rugged topography, lively Modernist design emerged in the late 1940s and the 50s up and down the coast. A vigorous school of design sensitive to the silver light, steep sites, and rainforest of B.C.'s lower mainland emerged in Vancouver. That school did not determine developments on Vancouver Island, we argue, but without doubt stood strongly in the background. Indeed, the Logan Mayhew House in figure 4 was the product of a Vancouver design office, and several Modernist architects who made
Local Knowledge: Emergence of the Modern Movement in Victoria
Martin Segger

While Victoria witnessed the emergence of an identifiable regionalism in architectural design in the work of F.M. Rattenbury, Samuel Maclure (figure 21), Thomas Hooper, and others during the early years of the century, the economic stagnation of the 1930s and 40s was not kind to the city’s architects. The result was a retreat towards traditional international influences in architectural design. A return to distinctive innovation in built form and use of materials awaited the Modernism of the 50s, when a new group of enthusiastic practitioners such as Arthur Erickson, Doug Shadbolt, and Barry Downs in Vancouver, and John Di Castri, John Wade, and Alan J. Hodgson in Victoria brought indigenous design back to what is sometimes called the Georgia Basin.10

James & James’s main post office on Government Street (1948–52), the first major postwar monument in the Victoria landscape, was a late variant of Art Deco hovering between neoclassicism and International Style modernism, and a far cry from their English and American vernacular when the two brothers had worked in the shadow of Rattenbury and Maclure.

Wartime saw Art Deco give way to so-called Art Moderne, often with stringent enthusiasm. Architect William Jacobs Sennyn had pioneered the spare lines, white streamlined surfaces, and rhythmic massing of Art Moderne in the Tweedsmuir Mansions overlooking Beacon Hill Park in 1936. Scarce and substandard building materials during the war years may have further popularized the stucco-finished look among local contractors. The Gordon Head Campus Communications Building (1941–42), which survives at the University of Victoria (at 2260 McCay Road), is a small but sophisticated essay in the idiom. Patrick Biley’s Athlone Apartments (1947–49, figure 23) and—also Biley Wade Stockdale—Salvation Army Building at 757 Pandora Street (1946–47), as well as a series of houses designed by S.N. Hill in approximately 1941–45 for the A.H.F. Stelck family at 1214, 1218, and 1221 Old Esquimalt Road (figure 24), are of very high calibre. However, these additions to the townscape, with their smooth lines, suave surfaces, and sparse flat ornamentation, typify a period that experienced massive inroads by foreign interests into the local
economy and popular culture. While some of these structures are significant monuments in their respective idioms, and were hailed in their own day as progressive, they are still foreign and estranged from the traditional residential character of Victoria, which even today maintains a love affair with the picturesque.

Architect and critic Chris Gower has written on the role of “centenarianism” in ushering in to Victoria the Progressive architectural movement. Certainly, the economic boom and heady patriotism that accompanied various 100-Year-Something celebrations (1858: Crown Colony of British Columbia established; 1863: Victoria becomes a city; 1866: union of Colonies of British Columbia and Vancouver Island; 1871: British Columbia enters Canadian Confederation) provided some opportunities for monument building. Victoria marked 1958 with construction of the Beacon Hill Plinth Zero monument designed by Rod Clark. A pivotal figure, it has already been noted, was Mayor R.B. Wilson, who kickstarted the urban renewal of Victoria’s downtown with the city’s own Centennial Square project (figure 25) and, who, as a board member, had spearheaded the campaign to relocate Victoria College—the nucleus of the University of Victoria, founded in 1963—to Gordon Head. To plan the new campus he approached one of America’s foremost planning firms, Warburton Bernardi Emmons, of the San Francisco Bay area,47 which oversaw the development of a “garden campus” (figure 26). In its own way, then, UVic has as strong a planning pedigree to boast of as the far better known Simon Fraser University, created by the same legislative act and after an international design competition laid out by Erickson Massey.

Just as the university campus was to grow within the tensions of a bifurcated aesthetic, the heroic grey neo-brutalism of abstract modernism blunting into the green folds of its sylvan setting (figures 27 and 28), so “Old Town” Victoria set off in search of a compromise blend of romantic historicism (paint-up and preservation) with International Style modernism (shopping centres, highrises and freeways). The seminal document of Wilson’s mayorality, Over All Plan for Victoria (1965), established the terms and language of the discourse which would carry forward some thirty years. So the monuments and personalities of this period would dominate Victoria for a generation: architects Nicholas Bawill, Rod Clark, Peter Cotton, Clive Campbell, and Alan J. Hodgson—at work, variously, restoring Bastion Square (figure 29), conserving the Old Town, and reconstructing burnt-out Government House—and the powerhouse firms of Battersby Howat Stockill,48 R.W. Siddall Associates, Wagg & Hambleton, and John Di Castri, who inserted parkades and commercial and institutional monuments into the downtown core or the greenfields of suburban Saanich—which itself built a Corbusian municipal centre (Wadsack STOCKILL Armour, 1963–65) and defined its urban containment boundaries at that time. The work of Vancouver’s Modernist architects was also represented: the case of the Logan Mayhew House (figure 4) has been cited. Shortly after building that, the same architects were responsible for the new Victoria building of the B.C. Electric authority at Pandora Avenue and Blanshard Streets above left

Fig 27 Maclean Building, UVic, Gordon Head, R.W. Siddall, architect, 1966–67, is in contrast to the rather dilapidated and paper International Style modernism of the university’s first buildings (e.g., Clearihue “A” wing). New ones like this added later in the decade look the heavier, more ponderous look (often realized in concrete) that had been pioneered in the previous work of the French Swiss architect Le Corbusier and was dubbed “Brutalist” or “Neo-Bauhaus.” PHOTO: L. SAMUEL, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA ARCHIVES, HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTION, 0360350.

above right

Fig 28 McPherson Library, UVic, Gordon Head, R.W. Siddall, architect, 1964, as seen through the colonnades of the Elliot science complex (W. R. B. Curtis for B.C. Department of Public Works, 1952–64). By their “garden campus” plan, WBS aimed to allow buildings of different character, by different architects, added over time, to be unified by town, campus, and planning, within a radius of seven minutes walk. PHOTO: R. THOMAS, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA ARCHIVES, HISTORICAL PHOTO, ARCH 042400.
above

**Fig 30** Corner of Bastein Square (right) and Longley Street (left), Victoria, ca. 1959, before restoration. The nearest building is Law Chambers, Francis M. Rattenbury, 1899. Likely the photo was taken by architect Peter Cotton.

COLLECTION OF P. COTTON

above right


WITH PERMISSION

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**Prospects**

This booklet represents an attempt to start a conversation in Victoria and on Vancouver Island about the value and meaning of postwar architecture and design, and about possible initiatives to preserve examples of that work. Significantly, it is also an opportunity to broaden our civic perception of Victoria to include, in addition to our late-nineteenth-century self-image, the overwhelming evidence of the city’s postwar history and its role in fashioning the contemporary city we live in.

Victoria Modern is a proposed five-year project, multi-faceted and even malleable at this point. Mostly, though, it relies on continued interaction between institutional programs and the community at large. To date, this partnership has been invaluable, and from it we extend an open invitation to the public to become involved as we proceed—or invent—the next stage of development. To give you an idea of what’s possible, here is a list of project components for Victoria Modern suggested to this point:

- a booklet series inaugurated by this, Victoria Modern, volume one: an introduction—to provide a research legacy and to keep you informed about what we’re up to;

- a program of exhibitions on postwar Victoria, Topaz Heights, Centennial Square, and the work of individual architects and, possibly, builders—we’d like to see the exhibitions installed in the community (Mayfair Mall and City Hall, for example) as well as at the Multifield Art Museum & Gallery;

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**Oriental Hotel Courtyard**
Project Team

Christopher Lefler is a PhD candidate in architecture at the University of Melbourne (Australia) and an alumnus of the University of Victoria’s Department of Visual Arts. His response to the socio-political dimension of Victoria’s built environment began with “Bus Shelter,” his 1998 performance-installation in response to the private construction of public space. Since 2004 he has volunteered his expertise in contemporary theory in architecture and his experience in curatorial programming to the Victoria Modern project.

Elizabeth (Beth) Macdonald is a distinguished graduate of the History in Art department at the University of Victoria. She participated in initial research and continues with exhibition development for this project. She has also curated two art gallery exhibitions of work by adults with disabilities. Beth likes to travel and is pleased that her current interest in architecture enabled her to appreciate the modern architecture of Tel Aviv and the range of historic architecture in Britain.

Professor Martin Segger has taught architectural history and heritage conservation at the University of Victoria for twenty-five years. He is founder of and continues as academic advisor to the University of Victoria’s Cultural Resource Management Program. He has consulted in architectural conservation projects internationally, received numerous research grants and awards, and is the author of books, articles, and films on British Columbia architectural history. He currently chairs the Marion Dean Ross/Pacific Northwest Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians.

Dr. Christopher Thomas, editor of this publication, is an Associate Professor in the Department of History in Art at the University of Victoria who specializes in the history of modern and contemporary architecture, especially in North America. He is the author of the book The Lincoln Memorial and American Life (2002), and of other articles and reviews on subjects in Canadian and American architecture. Chris has lived in Victoria since 1992.

above left to right, Christopher Lefler, Beth Macdonald, Martin Segger, Christopher Thomas
Acknowledgements

The team gratefully acknowledges the help of many others and, since the following list—like so much else here—is a work in progress, asks that if someone has been inadvertently omitted the omission be forgiven but pointed out to us. The team members begin by acknowledging one another for the gifts and enthusiasm each has brought to the project. Barbara Winters, who since 2000 has managed the overall CURA operation from which Victoria Modern springs, has—all agree—loved and worked into life this project, as she has the others, taking a personal interest that cannot be measured; our project is simply inconceivable without her. Rosa Shea, lastly Barbara’s assistant in the CURA office, kindly agreed to co-edit the manuscript. Barbara also led us to Mary Scobie, dedicated book designer and co-author, effective partner in the project. Behind the work of this group is the Social Science & Humanities Research Council of Canada through its program for Community-University Research Alliances (CURA); inaugurated in 2000 and extended in 2003, this project based at the University of Victoria was among the first of these. The team acknowledges the support of the department and of Dean of Fine Arts Dr. Giles Houston, especially the encouragement of faculty members who produced research projects before ours.

We have had many other helpers. Caroline Riedel of the McMillan Art Museum & Gallery generously gave time and assistance over several years, attending many meetings and deftly greasing the rails for us when we asked. We also thank Cheryl Robinson of the McMillan staff. Architect Chris Gower has nourished an interest in the built fabric of postwar Victoria longer than most of us, supported in this interest by his employer, Terry Williams, longtime partner of early modernist John H. Wake [ed. 1997]. Architect Franc M. D’Ambrosio also shows a debt to the postwar design generation and has encouraged our interests and made available for study and publication photographs of his own recent work done in that tradition. As the history section explains, in early 1997 a committee began to meet, under the auspices of the Victoria chapter of the Architects Institute of B.C., for the purpose of promoting Victoria’s postwar architecture; we gratefully acknowledge its members, who numbered—besides some named already or elsewhere—Natalie C. Smith, Doug Taylor Lee, Jim Kerr, Pamela Madoff, Silvia Bascal, Nicholas Bowell, and Ray Hunt. We also thank Claude Maurer, Bob Wise, and Allan Geller. We note our research partners in a CURA project since 2000, Documents Inc., especially Marco D’Agostini and Robert Lemon. As students at UBC, Alan Elder (who has gone on to a curatorial career in a related arena at the Canadian Museum of Civilization), Kim Reinhart, Ron Davies, Debi Saul, Graham Winterbottom, Aylja Sopine, Ross Macaulay, Angela Rook (formerly Smith), Karen Wough, and Steve Short participated in various ways in previous stages of Victoria Modern. Special note is taken of the students of HA 499 in fall 2002, especially Alana Brooks (who continued work in 2003). This is the seminar Beth Macdonald describes in her account. Chris Thomas wants to take this opportunity to acknowledge Beth for her willing work in tracking down answers to pesky research queries while this manuscript was in final preparation.

Others deserving mention are Steve Barber; Jennifer Nell Baird and Judith Andersen of the Hallmark Society; Jay Davis; Helen and John Edwards; Donald Luxon; Dorothy Mindenhall; Valerie Murray and the staff of Abbotsford Garden; Corey Pallister, Jill Wake; and Rhoda Windsor-Ulcombe. Christopher Lefter acknowledges invaluable personal assistance from Stephen Ashton, Anita Gallizzi, and Lorna Knowles. Beth Macdonald would like to thank the residents of Topaz Heights for their willingness to share their stories and photographs with us and the public. These items include the poem by Anne McKeachie found on page 15. Beth would also like to thank Norm for his patience—or was that impatience?

It seems too obvious to say, but isn’t the project Victoria Modern could not have reached the stage it has without the involvement of some of those who created the material we are studying—the modernist architects themselves, especially John Di Castri, Alan J. Hodgson, and Rod Clark. In the background to these, Christopher Lefter notes, is the work of B.C. Department of Public Works in the postwar period, which became a nursery for so much design talent, including that of Herbert Whitaker, John Di Castri, Peter Cotton, and Alan J. Hodgson. Sadly, we must honour the passing in September 2005, as this booklet was nearing completion, of John Di Castri.
Endnotes


2 As editorial cartouche for the Vancouver Sun from 1955 to 1983, the Englishman Tours built a national reputation for such unprecend-
ted as his Empress series, which used a cast of retired colonels, doway-
ables, and other holdovers of British imperial service as a vehicle to comment on the dizzying social change of his own pe-
riod. See The Best of Martin (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1964). The Permanent Empress Hotel archive also holds a thorough col-
celation of these cartoons which, as of this writing, it displays in the hotel’s lobby. "What English from the English is what poster
Emily Carr says her father, an early critic, called Victoria: see the Bank of British (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1942), 112, for a cast of their, see Terry Boardman, "What English from the English:"
A Very Short History of Victoria (Vancouver: Douglas and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; and; an
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