

Group plans restoration of Heather Pavilion

Interior fitted out for new uses

By ALISON APPELBE

Early in this century, the Heather Pavilion stood massive and alone on the hill above False Creek.

The granite structure, built in a U-shape in 1906 with wings added four years later, has corner towers with cupola roofs, a series of arched balconies and pillared entrance. The roof is black slate.

There were once beautifully landscaped lawns and rose gardens in front, off 10th Avenue. A curved drive ran up to the entrance, which opened into an elegant rotunda.

However, as the Vancouver Hospital complex gradually expanded over the decades, the Heather Pavilion largely disappeared in a maze of uninteresting extensions and structures.

Now, as the city and province consider the long-term future of the hospital and the need for park land in the area, a group is determined to

rescue the original pavilion and restore it as a landmark site.

"Once you peel away the various additions, the original building is essentially there," says architect Richard Henriquez. He says the building is sound and more than 90 per cent of the walls are intact.



Ford

Henriquez, whose firm restored the historic Sinclair Centre, is one of several prominent Vancouverites who formed the Heather Heritage Society. The goal is to fully restore the pavilion to accommodate a wide range of new uses.

The society formally launches the long-term effort with a public meeting Jan. 25, at 7:30 p.m., at Heritage Hall on Main Street.

For the past few years, the city, area residents and park and heritage activists have been discussing the future of land bounded by 10th and 13th avenues, and Oak and Ash streets, as hospital officials plan to consolidate services in a new tower west of the Centennial Pavilion.

While some want all vacated buildings demolished, the city has given the heritage proponents several years to come up with a practi-

cal, self-financing proposal for the Heather Pavilion.

"The city has said the building can be saved if a use could be found for it," says society treasurer Marguerite Ford. "There's still time."

Uses being explored for about 50,000 square feet, Ford says, include adult and child day-care centres, a bed-and-breakfast-style hostel for hospital visitors, premises for health-care organizations, medical archives and fitness and recreation facilities.

Ground-floor retail and restau-

rant uses are also suggested.

Walking around the portion of the pavilion near 10th and Willow that is still exposed and visible, society chair Janet Anderson admires the sculpted granite blocks that comprise the entire original structure. "Can you imagine that all being in a landfill?" she asks.

Noting the arched windows and balconies where patients sat in mild weather, she adds: "We've heard that it could be a duplicate of the Royal Edinburgh Infirmary," where many famous surgeons taught

Canadian doctors decades ago.

If seismically upgraded and fully restored outside (as well as renovated inside for modern uses) — at an as-yet undetermined cost, the building would look exactly as it did in a dramatic photograph that was part of the leather-covered diplomas presented to early nursing graduates.

"It's an important building to a lot of people," she adds, noting that thousands of patients and health-care providers will remember its large Florence Nightingale-style wards.



The Heather Pavilion in the 1920s, then the entire Vancouver General Hospital.

Stories wanted

The Heather Heritage Society wants to hear from people with interesting memories of, or stories about, the Heather Pavilion.

Patients, visitors, doctors, nurses, and other people are asked to write to the society at 4658 Bellevue Dr., Vancouver, V6R 1E6, or phone 224-3607.