



HISTORY IN THE MAKING

In 1968, Canada's co-op housing movement consisted of a handful of activists in different parts of the country working in isolation. Today, almost 150,000 people live in co-op housing.

The past 20 years have been filled with political struggles to establish and enlarge the co-op housing sector. Here are some of the highlights:

1968 In the year of CHF's birth, its members petition the government for federal legislation and financing for housing co-ops.

1970 After successful lobbying by CHF, the federal government provides money to build five pilot co-op housing projects from a new \$200 million innovative housing fund. In Calgary, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Toronto and London, new co-ops are formed.

1973 The federal government introduces Canada's first co-operative housing program. Hard work by CHF to convince the government of co-op housing's legitimacy and the government's search for alternatives to public housing are responsible for the program. In the next five years 8,000 co-op units are produced.

1978 Out of the blue, the federal government announces changes to the co-op housing program that are unacceptable to CHF. A cross-country lobby by housing co-op activists for a workable program is effective.

The federal program changes are modified, and with federal government

assistance, the co-op housing sector blooms. Almost 5,000 co-op units a year are built between 1978 and 1985.

1984 The roof nearly falls in on Canadian co-op housing development. A 1983 CMHC study lauds co-ops for producing good quality, well-operated, affordable housing, but attacks them as costly and poorly targeted because they don't house only the poorest.

For months the media stories about co-ops are negative. Federal funds for new co-ops are slashed. Only 3,400 new units are financed.

Housing co-op activists rally again. Across the country, hundreds turn out to public meetings in support of new co-ops. Responding to public pressure, the newly elected Conservatives promise action.

1986 The new federal index-linked mortgage program is announced. ILMs, researched and lobbied for by CHF, provide financing for all new federally-supported co-ops. Co-op housing starts are still lower than in our hey day (about 3,500 a year), but the future of the sector looks secure.

1988 We're here, we're 50,000 units strong, and we want an even better federal co-op program. CHF members lobby in the spring for increased funds so that more low and moderate income earners can move into new co-ops. We eagerly await a response at our 20th anniversary annual meeting this month by Stewart McInnes, the federal minister responsible for housing.



We're the people who live in non-profit co-operative housing. You may also know us as your neighbours, co-workers, or as members of your local church, PTA or other community organizations.

We're families, couples and singles. We're from all backgrounds, income levels, ages and cultures. You'll find us in big cities and small towns.

What we have in common is that we've discovered an alternative to renting from private landlords that's more affordable than individual homeownership.

We're members of housing co-operatives. And that means we're our own landlords!

HOW DOES CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING WORK?

Co-operatives are a relatively new alternative in housing.

A non-profit housing co-op is jointly owned by its members — the people who live in it. Some co-ops are highrise apartment buildings. Some are lowrise apartments, townhouses, rowhouses, semi-detached and/or fully-detached family homes.

But the important point is that we residents jointly own and operate our own housing on a non-profit basis.

The members of each of our housing co-ops democratically elect a board of directors. Together we

decide on all management policies, monthly housing charges (or 'rent'), and other matters.

None of us individually owns his or her residence — so there is no need for a major investment. Instead, each of us leases our unit at cost from the co-ops to which we belong. As individuals we cannot sell our residences on the market, and inflate the price of housing for others.

These factors ensure that a non-profit housing co-op will always be affordable, because the housing charges will only increase with costs.

WHY DO WE CHOOSE TO LIVE IN CO-OPS?

Many of us simply cannot afford to own private homes. Some of us, such as the elderly, single parents, and the disabled, have found that individual homeownership does not provide the living environment that we now need.

In our co-ops, we have safe, secure and affordable housing, and we have a say in how they are run. We live in friendly, sharing communities of people who will work with their neighbours to improve their living environment.



Province photo by Rick Loughran

Landmark row of houses on Pacific Street was saved by \$2-million purchase for co-op housing.

PROVINCE

JUN 07 1983

Landmark homes saved

By JAN O'BRIEN

Province Municipal Reporter

A landmark row of old wooden houses on Pacific Street at the entrance to Vancouver's West End will live on as co-operative housing.

"It really was the 11th hour for these houses," architect Roger Hughes said Monday. "It was five minutes to 12."

The houses were deteriorating and the developer-owners of the buildings wanted to unload them. So at the request of Pacific Heights Co-operative, the City of Vancouver stepped in to

buy the property for \$2 million.

Now eight of the 10 houses, built about 80 years ago, will be saved and renovated to make 16 family-size units, says Hughes.

Another 75 apartments will be built in a seven-storey building to be located behind the old houses.

"These are standard family houses built at the turn of the century. The value is in saving the streetscape," says Hughes.

The woodframe houses have distinctive dormers built in the roofs. Hughes describes them as cottage

style with quasi-Victorian and art nouveau features.

Ald. Marguerite Ford said a report on heritage buildings listed the houses as the most intact and representative of an era in Vancouver construction.

The city will be leasing the site to the co-operative for 40 years. Backed by a Canada Housing and Mortgage Corp. subsidized mortgage, the co-op, which is managed by the Columbia Housing Advisory Association, will spend about \$8 million for the land and buildings.

Since the site was obtained while the market was down, Ford says the city will get the full lease value of 75 per cent of the purchase price.

Eighty of the units will be two- or three-bedroom units, large enough for families, and another five will be accessible to disabled persons.

A recent city report criticized co-ops for failing to provide as much help as they could to low-income earners. Mark Bostwick, project coordinator for Columbia Housing, said the average family income in the Pacific Street co-op will be about \$16,000 per year.

Delighted with Co-op Coverage

SCOOP: 1987

The Aug./Sept. issue of SCOOP has a picture and an article on the houses with additions which is now Pacific Heights Housing Co-op.

My father built these houses between the years 1903 and 1908. They are similar in design to a block of houses he built on Broadway at Carolina in Vancouver. The architect is unknown.

Our family was delighted with the coverage given to this co-op. We personally thank Hughes and Baldwin for helping make the restorations and changes possible.

Frances M. Spear nee Henderson
Brooksford Place Housing Co-op

Pacific Avenue houses saved

Your eyes haven't been playing tricks on you. The houses on Pacific Avenue near the Burrard Bridge *have* been moved back several metres from the street front.

Those eight houses are going to form 16 units of a 91-unit housing cooperative called the Pacific Heights Housing Cooperative. Roger Hughes Architects are moving the houses off their original foundations to have them cleaned out and re-filled with fresh foundations.

The houses have been completely gutted and would probably have been torn down if the co-op hadn't come on the scene.

The houses individually have no heritage value but as Mark Bostwick, Columbia Housing Advisory Service co-op coordinator says, "They aren't heritage houses but they are what I'd call classic. They're a great example of old Vancouver architecture."

Bostwick says there is a strong feeling about living in these houses among the co-op owners, who will each pay 25 percent of their annual earnings to take up residence as part of the mini-community in one of the units.

"People are trading what I call space for place." He says that there are, surprisingly, a number of families who want to live in the West End with their children. The co-op is an appealing alternative to apartments, he says.

When it opens at the end of 1984 or early 1985, the complex will boast the eight houses, a seven-level building behind them with two community rooms and a long, narrow courtyard-cum-park between the houses and the building.

Several of the co-op members used to live in the houses when they were single family dwellings. One of the 16 units the



The houses are up on stilts while the new foundations are laid. Photo Jim Hutson.

houses will be converted into will be especially equipped for a handicapped resident. (It's already been taken by a member.)

Bostwick stressed the idea that the cooperative is "a little village in the city with both the pluses and the minuses. Everyone knows everyone."

The co-op also provides a variety of owners, including low-income or fixed income members, with affordable housing. Some may be paying as little as

\$100 or \$150 a month, according to the amount of money they take in during the year.

And the best thing, says Bostwick, is that his company is only around long enough to make sure the owners get on the right track. They become responsible for meeting the mortgage, making regulations and generally running the whole complex, as kind of a "little government."

"As soon as they move in, we drop out."

The houses on Pacific Avenue were all constructed around the turn of the century and for a time, most of the West End was made up of the wooden buildings with their bay windows, turrets and elaborate mouldings.

"Everybody who has lived in Vancouver for any length of time knows those houses (on Pacific) because they see them as they're coming off the Burrard Street Bridge," Bostwick said. He added that architect Hughes is planning to paint the houses to make them more "bright and colourful."

Said Bostwick: "I think it's going to be very attractive and so do the members."



Artist's conception of the completed Pacific Avenue site.

Project saves homes

Co-op to build 91

By CRAIG SPENCE

Eight turn-of-the-century houses on Pacific Ave. near Burrard Street will be saved from the wrecker's ball by an innovative housing project slated for completion early next year.

The homes, built in 1905, were moved off their foundations last month and work has now begun on setting the gutted structures on new foundations.

When the project (designed by Architect Roger Hughs of the Pacific Heights Housing Cooperative) is completed, the wood frame

structures will house 16 of the co-op's 91 units.

Other units will be developed in a seven level concrete structure, which will be separated from the eight original houses by a courtyard and will feature a "street in the sky" connecting units at the fourth level.

Hughs said April 3 that the "street in the sky" concept will be a first for Vancouver but added that the most difficult part of the operation has been preservation of the row of existing houses.

"Moving the buildings around on the site was

probably the trickiest part," he said. The homes were moved to other portions of the parcel while work was carried out near Pacific Ave.

The shuffle may have been delicate but it was worth it, Hughs said.

Individually, the eight units are not valuable but taken together the row represents a version of Vancouver's West End long since replaced by skyscraping apartment towers.

"There's a degree of heritage merit in that as a group they've been there for a while. Individually they're

nothing, just early Vancouver builders' housing," Hughs said.

Once they are back on their foundations, however, and "all tarted up in Victorian colours", Hughs said the row will present a pretty picture for Vancouver motorists.

Hughs said the main building will also be architecturally interesting but added that it will have a subdued impact on the Pacific Ave. streetscape.

"The view angle is such that it won't be that visible from the street," Hughs said.



These turn-of-the-century houses along Pacific Ave. have a new lease on life. They will become part of a 91 unit Pacific Heights Housing Co-operative complex slated for completion early next year. Kent Kallberg Photo/Pentax.

Medal Awarded To Vancouver Co-op

photo by Gary Otte

Pacific Heights Housing Co-operative was one of the ten national winners of the 1986 Governor General's Medal for Architecture. The medal (awarded every four years) is the highest architectural award in Canada. It is given by the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, through the Governor-General. Pacific Heights is the only co-op ever to have won this award.

The architect firm, Roger Hughes Architects, is a medium sized firm established in 1976 and maintaining offices in Vancouver since that time. The two partners, Roger Hughes and Nigel Baldwin, have a combined experience of 30 years since graduation, and have worked on projects across Canada and the U.S.A. and in Great Britain.

Pacific Heights Housing Co-operative is a low-cost housing co-operative funded through CMHC on land owned by the City of Vancouver and developed by Columbia Housing. It is comprised of sixteen maisonette units in the restored houses, and a mix of two-storey and single-storey units in the new infill-building behind.

The firm believes that architecture must be regional. It must evolve from its environment, climate and culture.



Pacific Heights Co-op is the first co-op to win the Governor General's Medal for Architecture.

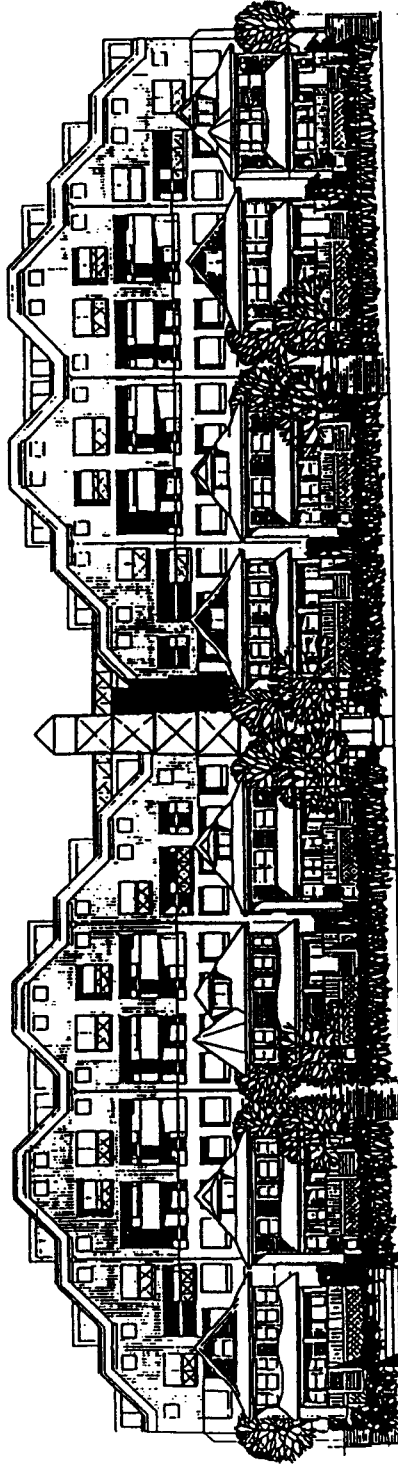
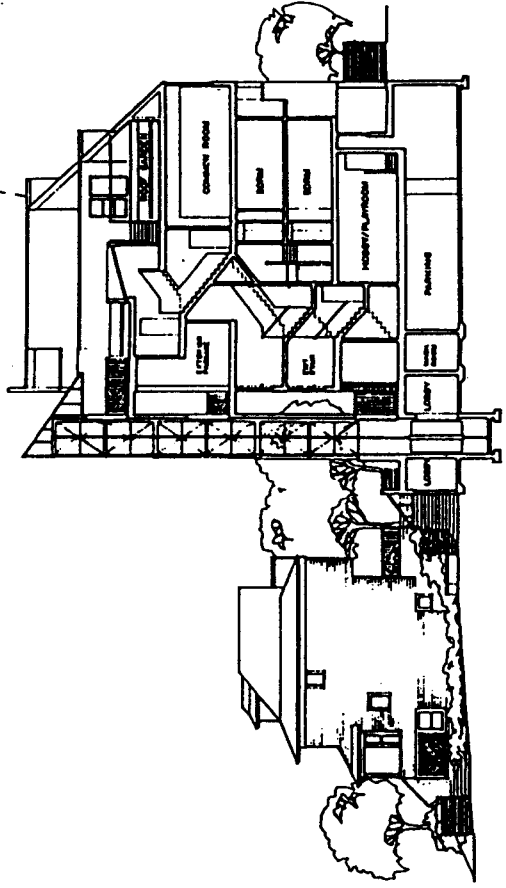
While west coast architecture has often been associated with "rain forest" design, Vancouver architects are developing a unique urban architecture, set in a romantic landscape, that combines the organized vitality of the big city with the less formal nature of Pacific Coast lifestyle.

The co-op is situated on Pacific Street, a major traffic link between downtown Vancouver and the Burrard Bridge. The site plan was developed specifically to maximize the usable open space and to create the best noise reduction for the majority of units and open spaces.

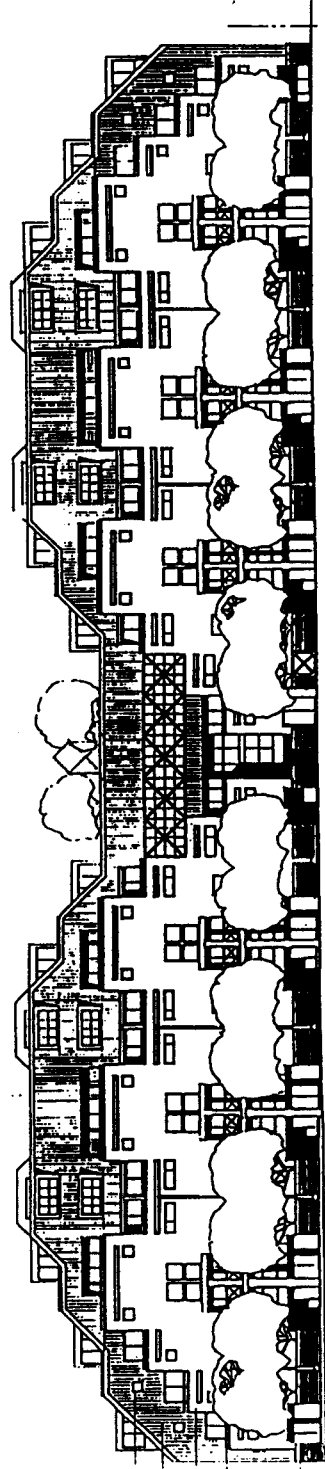
The City feels the project demonstrates three important policies. Firstly, it retains the last significant row of Victorian houses in the West End and uses them to give iden-

tity to a large and dense housing project. Secondly, the project couples family and non-family housing in an inner Vancouver location. Thirdly, the project is seen as a prototype for possible development on the B.C. Place site, less than half a mile away.

This project confirms that families can be accommodated in the inner-city at high densities in a liveable environment, taking advantage of the existing urban fabric to achieve a significant architectural statement.



PACIFIC STREET ELEVATION



LANE ELEVATION