

Tour Victoria's Rich Architecture

Victoria began as a replacement for the Hudson's Bay Company's western headquarters at Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River, now Vancouver, Washington. The company correctly surmised that once the boundary between British Territory and what was to become the United States was settled, it would no longer be the Columbia River. In 1849 Britain leased the entirety of Vancouver Island to the HBC with a condition that a colony was to be created. James Douglas, Chief Factor, moved the headquarters of the Company north to Vancouver Island. Due to the natural protection Victoria's Inner Harbour afforded, this became the chosen location of the new headquarters.

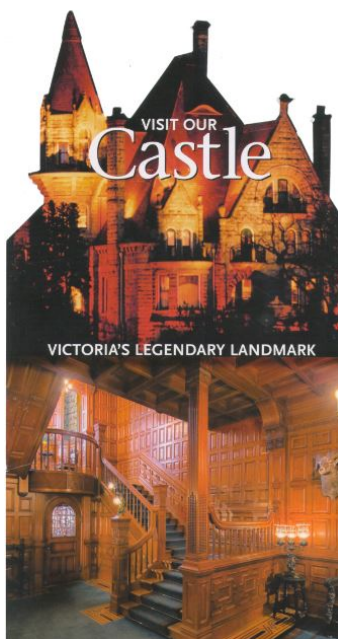
The original Fort Victoria was a stockade structure with all buildings located within. As the area's population increased it could no longer be contained within the Fort's walls. The Conference 2015 "Loyalists Come West" image is derived from this earliest of Victoria structures.

Over the intervening years architects designed many structures in many styles. The designs ranged from simple cottages to grand, opulent residences. Buildings for commercial, business and government uses also ran the full gamut of style and size.

To see a sample of the modest residence you can simply look across the street from our Conference Hotel at a typical late 1800's cottage.



On the opposite scale Victoria has the "over" grand residences as well such as the well known Craigdarroch Castle.



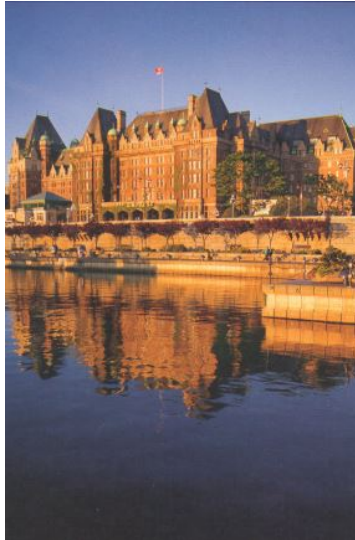
Two of Victoria's most notable architects were Francis Rattenbury and Sam MacClure.

Francis Rattenbury was a brash, young architect, who, when newly arrived in the Province, submitted the winning bid to construct the impressive stone Legislative Building. This structure replaced the original small group of buildings called the Birdcages, due to their striking resemblance to a birdcage. The new building was designed to impress, at which it succeeded admirably. Many consider its location as the most spectacular setting for a Legislative Building of any in Canada.



In honour of Queen Vitoria's Diamond Jubilee the Legislative Building was outlined in lights to give it a spectacular night presence. The effect is doubly impressive when viewed from across the harbour which reflects the lights glow. A short stroll from the Conference Hotel will allow you to tour the building or see the "confection" that is the building at night.

If garnering one of the two most prestigious building sites on the harbour was not enough, Rattenbury also won the commission to design the Empress Hotel, situated on the other prestigious site. The Inner Harbour is dominated by these two structures which together have given Victoria a world recognized image. A tour of the Empress is an offered opportunity if you are not planning to attend the Conference AGM.



Samuel Maclure was a much sought after Architect who produced some of Victoria's most cherished Edwardian style buildings. Victoria's premier neighbourhood, Rockland, is a major beneficiary of Maclure's magnificent mind. The second Government House, in the Rockland neighbourhood, was his design to replace the original that burned in 1899. Unfortunately the second Government House also burned in 1957. You will have an opportunity to view Government House if you chose the Ross Bay Cemetery / Government House Gardens Tour.

Perhaps MaClure's grandest of Victoria's grand structures is Hatley Castle which was designed for James Dunsmuir, Industrialist, Premier and Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia. Interestingly, James Dunsmuir was living in the second Government House while Hatley Castle was under construction. Hatley Castle is a short drive from downtown Victoria.



Many walking and driving opportunities exist to experience the rich tapestry of Victoria's architecture.

Your Conference Hosts can suggest some touring opportunities.



Keep checking the Victoria Branch Web site for upcoming News on

Conference 2015



Please visit the Victoria Branch website at www.uelac.org/uelvictoria/UELAC-Conference-2015-Victoria-BC.htm

Conference 2015 Planning Committee Victoria, BC