

2

Roundhouse Community Centre

Developer/Client: **Concord Pacific Place for Vancouver Parks Board**
 Architect: **Baker McGarva Hart**
 Landscape Architect: **Forma Design Inc.**
 City Staff: **Jim Lowden (Parks Board)**
Ralph Segal (Development Planner)
Pat Wotherspoon (Area Planner)
Robert Lemon (Heritage Planner)
 Date of completion: **1997**

PROJECT DATA

Zoning: CD-1
 Site area: 97,760 sq. ft.
 FSR: 0.5
 Use: Community Centre
 Floor area: 49,300 sq. ft.
 Height: 36 ft.



BAKER MCGARVA HART PHOTO

'Heritage Yard'



Drake Street entry to 'Neighbourhood Yard'

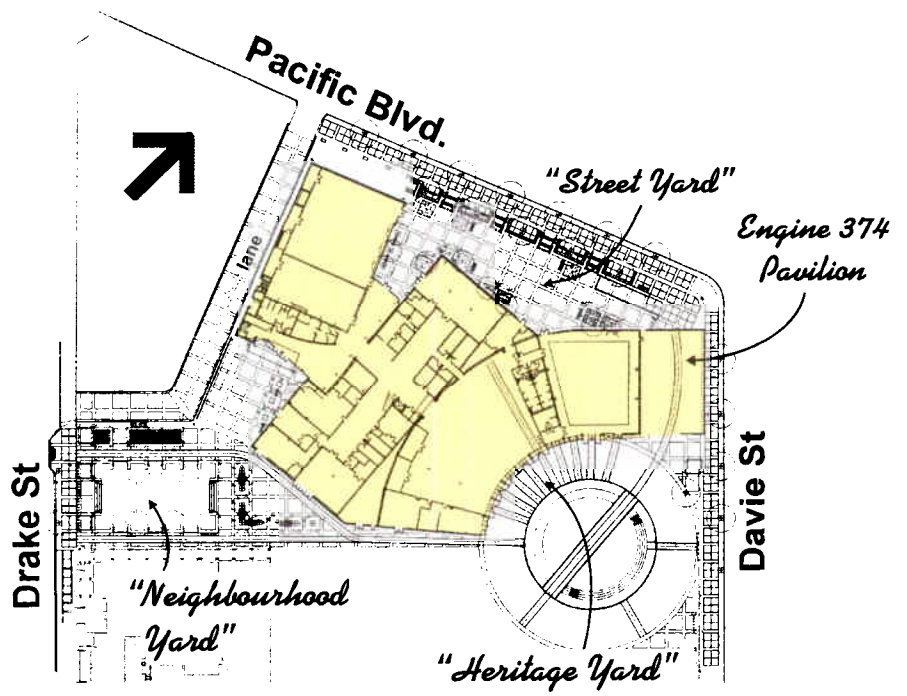
The Roundhouse Community Centre is an innovative integration of a restored heritage building with a new building. The original buildings are remnants of the C. P. Railway's False Creek maintenance complex and engine turntable, dating back to 1889. In 1985 the complex was restored for use during Expo '86 by Hotson Bakker Architects. The Community Centre additions include a new gymnasium wing oriented towards Pacific Boulevard, and a new roundhouse bay at Davie Street which now houses the historic Engine 374. The project is part of an urban design masterplan for this new 75 acre neighbourhood of 3,000 units completed to date between the Cambie Bridge and David Lam Park. Its design highlights the railway origins of the building while also providing a strong identity for its new role as the centre of this emerging community.

Key urban design issues for this project were adaptive re-use of existing buildings, and design response to a heritage context. The architects have responded by creating new additions which respect and reference the original structures, but without mimicry. New construction is clearly delineated from old with the use of steel, glass and differently coloured brick. New building elements are robust enough to be tolerant of the expected diversity of uses over time, yet modestly detailed so as not to compete with the heritage structures. Especially successful in this regard is the simple yet well-detailed new Engine 374 pavilion at the Davie/Pacific Boulevard corner - a glass skin enclosing a heavy timber structure which supports a simple flat roof. The heavy timber 'tree/trestle' structure recalls the original railway's wood construction and the heavy timber structure of the adjacent historic building. The articulation of the new brick and glass gymnasium wing, with its 'swallow' roof and clerestory windows, responds to the scale and texture of the new residential surroundings while also reflecting the variance in colour and texture of the older buildings.

The design addresses three different streets: Davie, Pacific Boulevard and Drake Street. The strategy to re-establish the identity of this heritage building in its radically new urban context and resolve the multiple front/back nature of the facility on its facing streets was to create three distinct 'yards' that anchor the Roundhouse to the new street grid and expand its presence towards these three street fronts: a 'Heritage Yard' which holds the historic turntable fronting Davie Street; the 'Street Yard' fronting onto Pacific Boulevard; and the 'Neighbourhood Yard' on Drake Street through which is located the main building entry. Each yard is marked on its



Engine 374 pavilion



street front by brick and timber gantry/pavilions. Deliberately 'incomplete' and somewhat heroic in scale, these elements imply a larger volume within which the Roundhouse sits.

The Heritage Yard facing Davie street is highlighted by the backdrop of the curved facade of the original building. With the adjacent new retail podium arcade echoing the centre's curved facade, and the engine turntable at its centre, this is a very inviting, well defined space. A new 'Gateway' tower element, broad steps up from the sidewalk, and continuous street trees extend the positive street edge while maintaining visibility of the centre's most prominent heritage facade. This yard, bridging commercial and community realms, works especially well for public events. When the yard is unoccupied, the Engine 374 pavilion and the turntable recall the memory of the historic activity on this site.

The gantries along the Pacific Boulevard 'Street Yard' straddle the modest grade change from the sidewalk down to the Roundhouse. They reinforce the continuity of spatial enclosure of Pacific Boulevard as the neighbourhood's "High Street" and connect the building to the street edge. This creates a protected sunken courtyard for community centre activities to spill out into. The cleft between the old and new buildings provides a secondary entrance that gives the Roundhouse a 'front' aspect onto Pacific Boulevard.

The 'Neighbourhood Yard' at Drake Street is the community's front door to the Roundhouse. The street pergola, the adjacent arcade, raised lawn, rail track and paving grid refer to the former utilization of the site by railway buildings and create a sunny welcoming courtyard for arrival, gathering and play.

This complex of buildings from different times and of differing uses has a strength and simplicity of design which both respects the historic legacy of the site and anticipates a broad range of public uses in the future. The project reclaims a significant symbol of the city's history for public amenity and enjoyment. As the neighbourhood develops around the community centre and the building becomes more heavily used, the various design strategies and devices will enable it to blend with its context, lending the building an air of inevitability and continuity.



Main entry from lane



'Street Yard' on Pacific Blvd.