

## STRATHCONA SECRET CYCLE

By Vancouver Biennale

5 KM ROUND-TRIP  
30 - 45 MINUTES

### ABOUT THE TOUR

Welcome to the Strathcona Secret Walk! This is a fun, fairly flat cycle that is suitable for families. We encourage you to take a walk with whomever you call family, and learn a bit about the people and history that made Strathcona what is today!

Strathcona is Vancouver's oldest residential neighbourhood, known for a strong working class and a diverse populations.

Enjoy the ride, and don't forget to share any pictures you take with #VanBiennale!

### ROUTE STOPS

1	<b>VIE'S CHICKEN &amp; STEAK</b>	209 Union St.
2	<b>HOGAN'S ALLEY</b>	221 Union St.
3	<b>SEMI PUBLIC</b>	271 Union St.
4	<b>FOUNTAIN CHAPEL</b>	823 Jackson Ave.
5	<b>UNION STREET ARCHITECTURE</b>	600 Block Union
6	<b>MILITANT MOTHERS OF RAYMUR OVERPASS</b>	Raymur & Keefer St.
7	<b>RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH + RAYMUR CABBELL HOUSING</b>	710 Campbell St.
8	<b>CRAB PARK</b>	Main & Alexander St.
9	<b>LET'S HEAL THE DIVIDE - TONI LATOUR</b>	<b>133 Keefer St.</b>
10	<b>CHINATOWN MEMORIAL SQUARE</b>	Columbia & Keefer St.





### #1 - VIE'S CHICKEN & STEAK

There's more blues to this building than you think! From the 50s to the 70s, this lot housed Vie's Chicken and Steak, a late-night eatery serving up Southern food, namely chicken and steak. Vie's was known for its lively atmosphere and for hosting many well-known figures such as Nat King Cole and Louis Armstrong.

Vie's is also significant because Nora Hendrix, grandmother of legendary blues musician Jimi Hendrix, worked there and he would frequently visit. Nora Hendrix was a strong advocate for the Black community in Vancouver. She is commemorated in a mural by Ejiwa "Edge" Ebenebe entitled "Remember Hogan's Alley" which is situated across the street at Nora Hendrix Place.

Vie Moore, the owner of Vie's Chicken & Steak, is pictured above (Photo: Randy Clark).



### #2 - HOGAN'S ALLEY

In the 1950s and early 60s the area looked very different as this spot used to be Hogan's Alley, home to a hub for Vancouver's Black Community. In 1967, the City of Vancouver began to level the area, to make room for the viaducts, part of a plan to build a freeway, which was never built.

In recent years, there have been efforts made to commemorate Hogan's Alley, and the people who lived and worked there.

**Watch the video from Black Strathcona to learn more about Hogan's Alley :**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ANX5kYh-8dc&t=21s>



### #3 - SEMI PUBLIC

This site has been home to a few different art installations and is a dedicated public art space operated by the non-profit organization 221A. The site has two live-stream cameras that are active 24/7, and are available to view anytime on Youtube.

The current exhibition is *xaw's shewáy' New Growth* 《新生林》 by artist T'uy't'tanat-Cease Wyss. As part of a youth curriculum, T'uy't'tanat-Cease Wyss led students to design and landscape the lot into a public garden featuring plants and flora Indigenous to this territory. If the gates are open, head in to enjoy a short walk around the garden - Be sure to lookout for the signage on plants indicating their species.

Previously, the lot featured an artwork titled *Vancouver Especially* (A Vancouver Special scaled to its property value in 1973, then increased by 8 fold) by artist Ken Lum. The installation was a 1:3 scale replica of a type of house known as the "Vancouver Special." The scale of the work was determined by the budget of \$45,000, comparable to the value of a non-squirrel sized Vancouver Special in the 1970's.

**Did you know?** In the 1970s, plans for a Vancouver Special would cost less than \$100 at Vancouver City Hall and permits could be approved within three days! You won't find that kind of turnaround these days...



### #4 - FOUNTAIN CHAPEL

***"All the families and everybody that wanted a church, we all got together, and commenced working for it to get this church started."***

**- Nora Hendrix**

With no church for Black families, residents got together to raise \$500 which was matched by the African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E.). The initiative was greatly supported by Nora Hendrix. With the raised funds, the community was able to purchase 823 Jackson, a former Lutheran church.

The Fountain Chapel became a staple of Strathcona, it served as a church and community gathering space, a choir was formed, and dinners they served would almost always sell out!

**Watch the video from Black Strathcona to learn more about the fountain chapel:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FitKUOG7Fhc&t=35s>



## #5 - UNION ST. ARCHITECTURE

As you walk down Union, you may notice the houses on one side are on a completely different elevation than the other. This odd type of construction goes back to when Union St. was a streetcar route - The vehicles at the time could not handle the scope of the climb, so it was levelled to a degree where they could breeze through.

Today, there's no streetcar on Union St, but it is a very popular cycling and walking route.

You're unlikely to find any "Vancouver Specials" around here, most of the homes were constructed before the popular house model.

*Photo: Scout Vancouver*



## #6 - MILITANT MOTHERS OF RAYMUR

Don't mess with moms! Back in the 1970's, a group of mothers raised concerns over the safety of their children crossing the busy train tracks on their way to and from school. After being ignored and dismissed by the rail company and city, they set up camp on the railway, blocking it. Eventually the city agreed to build an overpass, and though the women had to block the trains a few more times, the overpass was finally built by the end of 1971.

Today, trains still run several times a day so the overpass is used by many, particularly those in a rush! Thank you to the Militant Mothers of Raymur! The photo above shows one of the camps set up by these diligent mothers (photo: raycam.org)



**#7 - HOLY TRINITY CHURCH + RAYMUR-CAMPBELL HOUSING**



**The Holy Trinity Orthodox Church** was built between 1938 and 1940. The location was selected because Strathcona was home to many Russian immigrants, but attendees were also Serbians, Greeks, and Canadians.

**Raymur-Campbell Housing Project:** In the 1950s, apartment buildings were few and far between, and the population of Vancouver was growing steadily. Strathcona had been neglected by the city, and planners made it very hard for any improvements to be made, they declared it as a slum and began a \$100 million “urban renewal” project.

To make room for the Raymur-Campbell Housing and other highrises, 30 acres of land and heritage houses were bulldozed, displacing over 800 residents, half of which were of Chinese descent. The second picture above shows some of the demolition in 1966 (photo: Eve Lazurus)

Today, the housing is run by New Chelsea Society, and provides accommodation for families and independent seniors.



**#8 - CRAB PARK**

Tucked away behind the train tracks, CRAB Park is a fantastic little green space in the heart of our city. The park has a rich history and serves as an important community and gathering space.

CRAB park exists due to a dedicated group of people in the 1980s. Led by Don Larson, a group dubbed Create A Real Available Beach committee (CRAB) petitioned to create a green space and waterfront in the downtown area. It took several years, and a camp-out, but CRAB Park was eventually developed!

The location is important to local Indigenous peoples because prior to colonization it was used as a fishing, hunting, and clam digging site. During the Great Vancouver fire of 1886, Squamish First Responders arrived by canoe to rescue people fleeing the fire. Their heroic actions were formally recognized by the city in 2017.

For many years, sadly still today, the park has been used as a space to commemorate the Missing and Murdered Women of the Downtown Eastside. In 2007, along the trail, a monument stone was installed, it reads:

***The heart has its own memory, dedicated July 29, 2007. In honour of the spirit of the people murdered in the Downtown Eastside. Many were women, and many were Native aboriginal women. Many of these cases remain unsolved. All my relations.***



## #9 - LET'S HEAL THE DIVIDE - TONI LATOUR

*let's heal the divide*  
Toni Latour  
2020

**Look up!** *let's heal the divide* by artist Toni Latour was originally installed on the façade of Vancouver Community College for the 2015-2017 Vancouver Biennale. It marked the physical and perceptual divisions between the Downtown Eastside, one of the most impoverished postal codes in Canada, and one of the wealthiest commercial and financial districts.

Reinstalled in December 2020, the artwork is now located in Vancouver's Chinatown, a neighbourhood confronted with gentrification, class inversion, and the threat of cultural displacement from urban developers and city rezoning.

From a broader perspective, the artwork also resonates beyond its physical surroundings. Globally, we have witnessed institutional and systemic racism and violence, intense political conflict, the rise of the Black Lives Matter and Me Too Movements, the fight to end targeted transgender violence and discrimination, the continued struggle for Indigenous rights and environmental justice, and of course, a worldwide pandemic.

**What does *let's heal the divide* mean to you?** How does it touch on your experience and in what ways do you think we can reconnect and repair? Take a photo or video sharing your thoughts on the subject, tag it with #VanBiennale so we see it!



## #10 - CHINATOWN MEMORIAL SQUARE

You are now entering one of the oldest Chinatowns in North America, established during the gold rush of the 1890's.

Check out the Chinatown Memorial Monument by artist Shu Ren Cheng which commemorates the significant contributions of Chinese Canadians to the growth, vitality, and prosperity of Vancouver, British Columbia, and Canada. To the left are the beautiful Sun Yat Sen Gardens - definitely worth a visit on a sunny day!

Head back up Columbia St. towards Union St. to finish the ride.

### FINISH

The area has changed significantly since the days where crowds would gather to eat and hang out at Vie's Chicken and Steak, but there is still a strong sense of community amongst the residents.

Enjoy the area, support the many fantastic local businesses, and appreciate the rich history and culture that made it what it is today.

Feeling inspired? We invite you to share your thoughts, photos, and videos with us over social media. Use the hashtag #VanBiennale or tag us on any of our social media platforms.