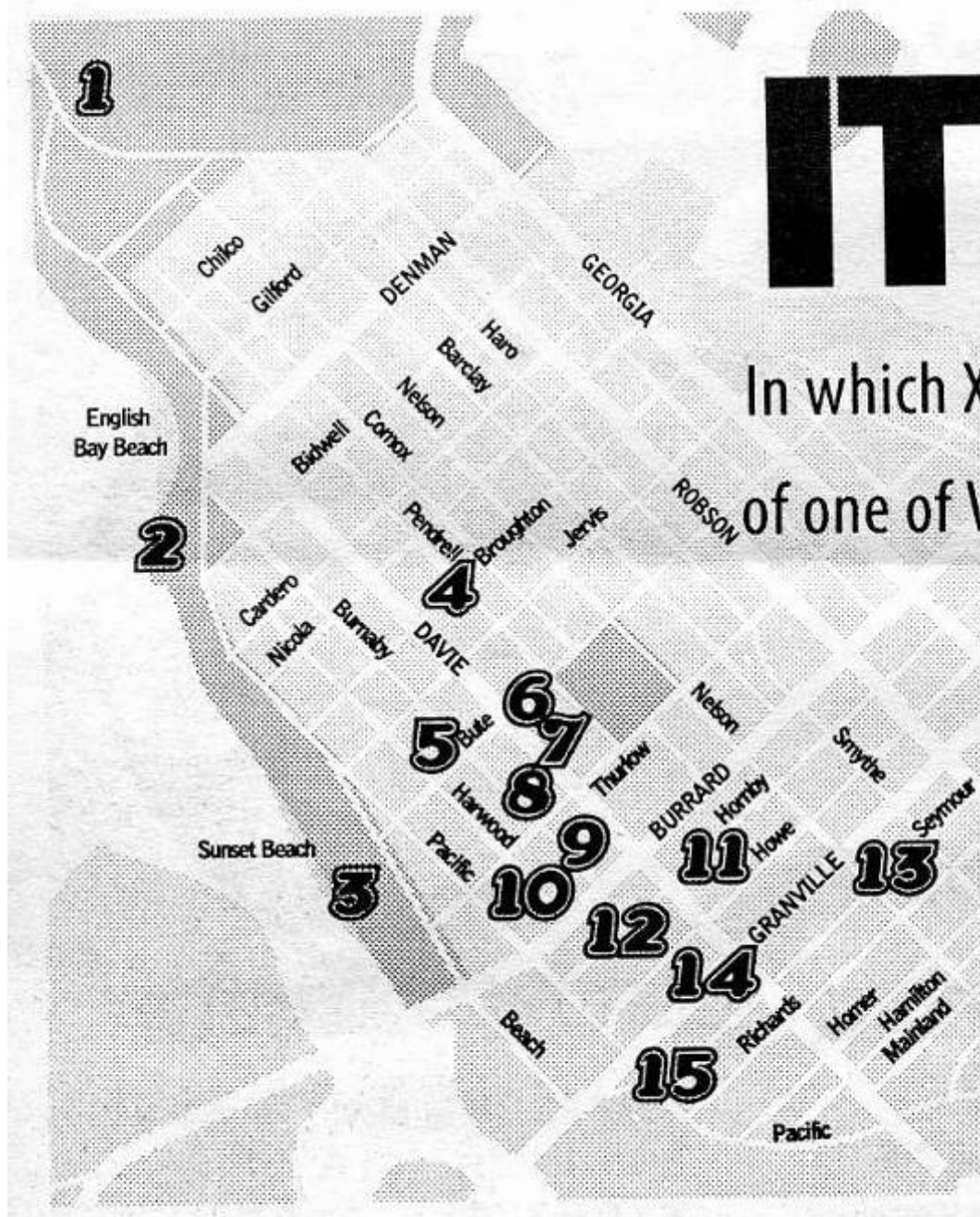


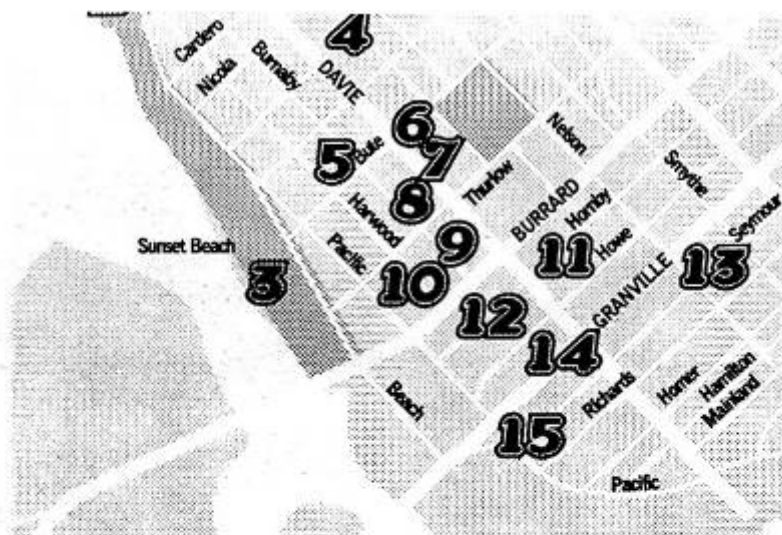
Walking tour



IT'S A TIME WARP

In which Xtra West contributor Gordon Brent Ingram gives readers a peek at the history and geography of one of Vancouver's queer communities as much is lost to new development





1. THE BLUFF ABOVE ENGLISH BAY

The first location proposed (unsuccessfully) for the Vancouver AIDS Memorial, on the bluff above the beach once called Eeyulshun (good footing), has a long gay history.

Along this shore going east was the dock that was the early centre for homosexual beach cruising in the city going back to the 1890s. This was also the site of Vancouver's first Gay Pride celebrations in June 1972.

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2. ENGLISH BAY BATH HOUSE & WASHROOMS

For people into that ambiance, this was the temple of toilet sex replete with the smells and sounds of the sea. But it has probably seen as many arrests and trials of gay men as any washroom in Canadian history from before the 1950s well into the late 1980s. Across the street is Alexandra Park, site of the annual AIDS Candlelight Vigil held every May.

Moving up on to Beach Drive, we follow the route of the Pride March throughout much of the 1980s and 1990s. We soon come to Second Beach and the upcoming location of the AIDS Memorial.

3. THE FRUIT LOOP

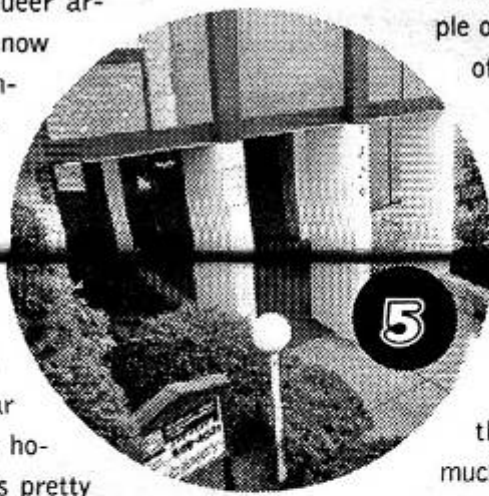
This has been a major site of car-oriented homosexuality and is the jewel in the crown of what the author of Vancouver's first general plan, Harland Bartolomew, termed, in 1928, the city's "pleasure drive system."

It can be a thrill to discover the queer history and geography of sites in a city and the routes that connect them. Streets are more than the buildings that line them; they're the ghosts of those who have walked them, the meetings of those who have organized for our liberty in the spaces you pass every day, and the parties and sex celebrations that once took place all around you.

And there are many more clues on the street, in this queer archaeology, than the now ubiquitous used condom. But don't expect these stories to get into a *Canadian history* trailer at the beginning of a major motion picture—at least not in the near future. Vancouver's homoerotic heritage is pretty raunchy.

Sadly, if the city is a collective memory, some of Vancouver's finest queer recollections are being obliterated by the month. It is time to retake some of those old walks and reflect on what's gone, what will be destroyed, and what is worth preserving.

Below is a short queer walking tour of Davie Street and environs, starting at English Bay.



4. BROUGHTON AND PENDRELL STREETS

North of Davie on Broughton at Pendrell, is the centre of male street prostitution in the 1970s.

The enterprising young men who once graced the neighbourhood were forcibly relocated by police in 1983 to Homer between Davie and Drake. Another hustling strip in the 1970s and 80s was the 1100 and 1000 blocks of Davie St.

5. 1320 BUTE ST, SOUTH OF DAVIE ST.

The first gay liberation institution in the West End, the Canadian Gay Activist Alliance was first established in 1971.

6. 1170 BUTE

The former offices of the now-defunct Angles newspaper and the home of The Centre, a community group offering a wide range of gay and lesbian services. This has been a major queer site for some 20 years.

7. 1167 DAVIE AND 1148 DAVIE

Once, Davie St. was an alcohol-oriented entertainment strip. Doll and Penny's Cafe, at 1167 Davie, has played the role of a major anchor in the diversification of Davie to one meeting the shopping needs of nearby residents in a safe space. Further east is

The Edge at 1148 Davie. This popular and smoky gay male coffee house became part of local legend in 1994 when its patrons fought back against a major gay bashing that left one man physically handicapped.

9. 1068 DAVIE

The site of the Canadian Gay Activist Alliance drop-in centre from March 1972 to May 1973.



'80s.

10. 1018 BURNABY ST (SOUTH AT BURRARD)

Now the garden of a recently constructed residential tower, this site was once Buddies, the celebrated gay men's club from the 1970s and

11. 1131 HOWE

This was the site of a short-lived lesbian bar circa 1975. Queenie's Truck Stop was upstairs at 1135 Howe Street. Now the site of Pacific Cinematheque, a consistently queer-friendly film programming and viewing space going back to the early 1980s.

12. 1251 HOWE ST

In the 1980s, The Odyssey represented something of a breakthrough in the political economy of "the ghetto" in its gay ownership and in its level of support for a range of gay queer political causes and service organizations.

13. 1131 RICHARDS

The first office of GATE (Gay Alliance Towards Equality), established in May of 1971.

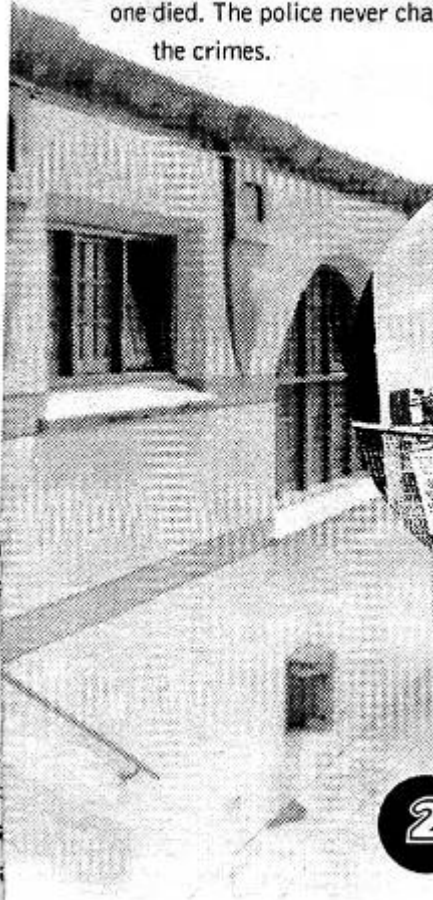
14. 612 DAVIE ST

Champagne Charlie's, a lesbian and gay bar in the 1960s and early 1970s. On Nov 11, 1973 a lesbian and seven of her gay male friends were assaulted by the management and thrown out after she complained of sexist remarks by staff. Champagne Charlie's soon went out of business because of the boycott that resulted.



8. 1221 THURLOW ST

This entrance to this, the first site of Little Sister's bookstore, was bombed three times in the 1980s while people browsed inside. Fortunately, no one died. The police never charged any one with the crimes.



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TOM BOWEN PHOTOS

15. 1369 RICHARDS ST

The Betwixt and Between Club, a gay club from the 1960s to 1972. Later in the 1970s it became the Playpen South. The Playpen South had the largest and most well-known backroom in the 1970s and early 1980s, which saw a lot of standup sex including fucking. The bar was closed down in the mid-1980s in response to the AIDS pandemic and the loss of so many of its regular patrons. This queer site was resurrected for a time in the mid-1990s as the mixed gay and bi/ambisexual after-hours club, The World. The building was torn down in 1998 and so far there are no plans to install a commemorative plaque.

Thanks to Ron Dutton of the BC Gay and Lesbian Archives.

Vancouver(as queer)scape: The construction of public space by sexual minorities in Pacific Canada by Gordon Brent Ingram, Anne-Marie Bouthillette, and Cornelia Wyngaarden, will be published later this year.