



Logo design and drawings courtesy of  
Brenda Gillespie and Kiyoshi Takahashi

# The Riverview Horticultural Centre Society

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## Geriatric Psychiatry 1936-2011 ANOTHER BUILDING CLOSES

by Norma Gillespie

The Provincial Home for the Aged Act had been passed in 1935. Geriatric care at Riverview had its start in 1936. At the N end of the grounds a series of cottages were upgraded to house the elderly patients, three new 100 bed buildings, were added, between 1944 and 1949.

In 1959 Valleyview Pavilion was official opened with 328 beds and would be known as the Admission and Infirmary building with more emphasis on intensive care of the sick and infirm. With the repeal of the Home for the Aged Act in 1959 units would now operate under the Mental Hospitals Act. They were now considered specialized mental hospitals for geriatric patients.

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"In the end we will conserve only what we love,  
we will love only what we understand,  
and we will understand only what we have been taught."  
...author unknown



## Geriatric Psychiatry 1936-2011 ANOTHER BUILDING CLOSES

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For 75 years geriatric psychiatry services have been provided on the Riverview site to the people of British Columbia. During this time, Valleyview developed as a centre of excellence in the field of geriatric psychiatry.

Hundreds of people took in the 'Celebration of Care' closing ceremony and tea at the Valleyview Pavilion in late 2011 hosted by BC Mental Health & Addiction Services( an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority). The general feeling of the many people gathered was one of sadness and disappointment that we were losing this marvelous facility.

It is our opinion that well maintained buildings should continue to be used for what they were intended. In this time of aging populations and fiscal restraint it is irresponsible to close such a building. This is a building with a kitchen and cafeteria, physio therapy, occupational therapy, treatment rooms, roof top and ground level gardens, offices etc. A building well designed for its intended purpose. This is a building ideally situated in the geographic centre of the Lower Mainland, close to the freeway, and with excellent bus service.

Valleyview Pavilion is a healing sanctuary located in a World Class Green Oasis.

*We must continue our efforts to preserve  
the Riverview site.*



## POCO GARDEN CLUB NEWSLETTER

Excerpt from PoCo Garden Club Newsletter President's Message -Oct. 2011

Thank you to Jim Thorleifson for allowing us to repost his article.

View online at [PoCo Garden Club's Blog](#) - Gardening news from Port Coquitlam, British Columbia, Canada

The provincial government and its appointed associates, Metro Vancouver directors, have recently announced plans to create a farming academy to be located at Colony Farm Regional Park. One would think that gardeners would instinctively support a plan to promote sustainable agriculture but the location of this academy is what should be setting off alarm bells amongst local residents, gardeners or not. I believe that Colony Farm and the Riverview lands should be seen as one extended resource for the residents of Coquitlam and Port Coquitlam, as well as for our neighbours in the Lower Mainland; resources that date back to the early days of the province and are amongst the few to survive to the present day while natural landscapes were paved over or built upon all around them.

It was in 1904 when work began on Riverview Hospital and adjacent Colony Farm. In 1912 British Columbia's first Provincial Botanist, John Davidson, established an arboretum and botanical garden at Riverview; in 1916 the garden was moved to the new UBC campus but, fortunately for us, the arboretum remained behind and is now, with mature specimens, one of the more beautiful destinations in the Lower Mainland to view rare trees in a natural setting. There has been pressure from some quarters to have the Riverview site returned to a role in mental health treatment; I don't know that the institutional setting is, any longer, appropriate for treatment of mental health issues, and may be better dealt with by utilizing smaller facilities closer to the community, but I do firmly believe that the existing facilities should remain institutional and of service to all British Columbians as originally intended. Why not re-establish Riverview, and its arboretum, as a satellite campus for UBC, or Simon Fraser University (or other post-secondary college) to reflect its heritage and origins as a horticultural garden? There are, I'm sure, plenty of other institutional uses that Riverview could embrace without turning the lands, and facilities, into additional urban sprawl. Meanwhile the heritage buildings on the site are being left to decay.

We know that the provincial government covets the real estate that these regional jewels occupy as seen back in 2007 when Housing Minister Rich Coleman proposed a development, with private sector partners, to construct up to 7000 residences, mostly condos and apartments, on the site of the Riverview lands. The outrage that this

proposal engendered seems to have put these plans on hold but they will arise, phoenix-like, again some day unless British Columbians make plain to our government that we do not wish to see these precious resources debased by development or to have their administration transferred to corporate interests. The draft Colony Farm Sustainability Plan states "The Academy concept is intended to attract partnerships with academia, other governmental agencies and the private sector". (ColonyFarmSustainabilityPlan-DraftReport-August2009.pdf – available at <http://colony-farm.blogspot.com/>) This, it seems to me, is the thin edge of the wedge in never-ending plans to wrest these natural spaces from the hands of the public and to milk them for all they're worth.



As for Colony Farm, although its role has traditionally been, in concert with mental health treatment, an agricultural one we no longer live in a community that has green spaces in abundance and the farm's lands would, I believe, be best put to use by returning them to their wild state as meadows and wetlands (both under concerted attack in Greater Vancouver) in order to provide habitat for wildlife and sea creatures and to provide a beautiful natural destination for British Columbians and tourists. If land for a farming research facility is really required, there is plenty of land in the Fraser valley that could be much better, and more easily, made use of – it is, after all, farmland, although there too the plough is steadily surrendering to the bulldozer – better hurry.

The proposal for an "academy" at Colony Farm is the latest round in a game of 'whack-a-mole' where the winner could stand to reap billions of dollars were they allowed to develop these properties to their heart's content. We must do all that we can to see that this proposal, like others to come in the future, is defeated; write, or e-mail, your municipal, regional and provincial representatives and register your resistance to the exploitation of Riverview and Colony Farm – tell them that we want the lands left largely intact and the facilities restored to their original Edwardian glory to the benefit of us all.

(Here's a copy of the Draft Regional Parks Plan downloaded from [metrovancover.org](http://metrovancover.org). - [RegionalParksPlan-1](#))





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## ANOTHER TWO BUILDINGS, thought to be no longer needed

Norma Gillespie

A pilot project at Riverview Hospital run by Coastal mental health since January 2010 will soon be closing down. This transitional recovery program has been providing care for approximately 40 people battling mental illness and addiction.

The ultimate goal is to help these people develop mental stability and a period of abstinence that would allow them to move on to the community.

Riverview was assisting the Burnaby Centre when more space was needed and was always meant to be a temporary solution while the health authority waited for its funding to establish specialized mental health beds. Gavin Wilson, director of public affairs for Vancouver Coastal Health, said "We're looking at a number of options, such as group homes, supported housing or whatever is appropriate for these clients," he added.



Davidson Creek adjacent to Brookside

Photo by Kiyoshi Takahashi

Brookside and Leaside, centered in the middle of the grounds seemed to have worked out well. The spacious, therapeutic grounds at Riverview, are the right kind of place for healing to happen. The use of the buildings at Riverview should be considered more than a temporary measure.

### 2012 Tree Tour Schedule On-line @

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