

Pink Palace Statement of Heritage Value

The Villa Maris, also known as the Pink Palace, is an iconic 101-unit apartment building situated on the Waterfront of West Vancouver. Typical of early apartment buildings in West Vancouver, the Villa Maris evokes a resort lifestyle and draws upon Miami Modern and New Sensualism with its use of poured-in-place concrete, employment of interior mosaic tile, and sweeping curved wall of parabolic arches featuring prominently on the main façade. This style of Modernism is rare in the Lower Mainland and brings elements of extravagance and glamour to otherwise stark and minimalist Modern buildings.

Built in 1965, the plan of the Pink Palace consists of a single corridor stretching down two wings spreading outwards at an oblique angle to make economical use of the irregular site and to maximize views of the water from apartments. The lobby employs elements of Hollywood Regency style, bringing further flamboyance to the landmark building. The heritage values of the Pink Palace are:

Aesthetic Heritage Value

- Rare Canadian example of New Sensualism, a Miami Beach strand of Modernism.
- Interior influences from both Miami Modernism and Hollywood Regency styles, including wall sconces in public spaces and suites which have since been replaced.
- Setting on West Vancouver waterfront.

Historic Heritage Value

- Association with building boom in West Vancouver in the 1960s.
- Early example of high-rise apartment building in West Vancouver from a time of changing demographics in the area.
- Association with prominent local landscape architect Cornelia Oberlander and valued as one of her late works.
- Possible association with architect Gerald Hamilton – further research required.

Scientific

- Its use as a triangulation site for mariners, along with the lighthouse.

Cultural Heritage Value

- Evocative of a beach resort lifestyle.
- Portrayal in media including a number of movies, television shows, and photo shoots set in the 1960s, and as one of eight Modernist masterpieces of West Vancouver architecture modeled in LEGO for the Bricktacular West Coast Modern exhibition in 2023.

Social Heritage Value

- Landmark building known locally and internationally as the Pink Palace.

Preliminary Character-Defining Elements

- Form, scale, and massing as expressed by its winged plan at an oblique angle and twelve storey height from Bellevue with an additional three storeys at the rear due to site slope
- Location on West Van waterfront and as landmark building viewable from land and sea
- Continuous use as rental residential high-rise
- Miami Modern New Sensualism style as typified by its use of poured-in-place concrete, employment of interior mosaic tile, and sweeping curved wall of parabolic arches featuring prominently on the main façade
- Exterior concrete walls painted in five different tones of pink
- Parabolic arch screened walkway painted white
- Porte cochere
- Exterior decorative iron balcony railings painted white
- Horizontal bands of metal framed windows interrupted by vertical concrete pilasters
- Brass and glass storefront entry glazing including louvred glazing
- Lion motif exterior plaques flanking both sides of the entry storefront glazing
- Landscape features on the rooftop garden designed by Cornelia Oberlander including:
 - Undulating mounds which evoke the West Coast landscape of the Salish Sea and Gulf Islands visible from the rooftop
 - Sedum mats planted on the mounds which showcase seasonal colours
 - Shore pines planted at focal points
 - Tall grasses
 - Organic placement of logs
- Interior features including:
 - Elements of Hollywood Regency style such as decorative iron railings, floral motif carpet in the lobby, and classical figure wall and floor sculptures in the lobby
 - Single-corridor plan with non-grouped elevators
 - Decorative iron guardrails which evoke the exterior balcony railings
 - Open lobby with exposed columns and window looking out onto the sea behind stair
 - Carpeted lobby with tile in heavy-traffic areas such as in front of elevators and doors
 - Original brass and glass walls separating amenity spaces from the lobby
 - Floating concrete spiral stair with cantilevered treads around a central column
 - Skylight above stair allowing view of spiral stair and visual continuity with curved balconies above
 - Mosaic tile at bottom floor of spiral stair
 - Mosaic tile at interior pool
 - Red leather poof where original fountain stood
 - Classical figure floor sculpture which originally stood in the fountain
 - Classical figure wall sculptures
 - Lighting has been changed; opportunity for restoration to the original time period
 - Exposed brick at lower floor of lobby with flush in-floor uplighting

Historic Images



Figure 1 Villa Maris in the 1960s. West Vancouver Archives 1.1.174.006

Contemporary Images



Figure 2 Exterior of the Pink Palace, 2024. Photo by Jennifer Clay



Figure 3 Porte cochere and entry, 2024. Photo by Jennifer Clay



Figure 4 Balconies, 2024. Photo by Jennifer Clay



Figure 5 Parabolic screen, 2024. Photo by Jennifer Clay



Figure 6 Lobby with poof, carpeting, decorative railings, and wall sculpture 2024. Photo by Jennifer Clay



Figure 7 Interior floating stair with decorative railing, 2024. Photo by Jennifer Clay



Figure 8 Floating stair, 2024. Photo by Jennifer Clay



Figure 9 Floating stair, 2024. Photo by Jennifer Clay



Figure 10 Interior pool, 2024. Photo by Jennifer Clay



Figure 11 Rooftop garden designed by Cornelia Oberlander, 2024. Photo by Adam Hatch