

Nestled into a corner at the north edge of Olympic Village is a small park with a big role.

Pocket Park provides a “neighbourhood park” experience for residents, different from the regional feel of the seawall, says Margot Long of PWL Partnership, the park’s designers. Located next to the social housing, Long says Pocket Park is designed

for families – even though it lacks any explicit play equipment.

“The play elements are landscape elements as well. For example, there are four gateways, where kids can go through a pipe and be in a playhouse. But you could look at it and just say it’s a green space.”

The little park will also become home to the largest industrial artifact in

SEFC (except heritage buildings) – the old gantry crane saved from the Canron steel fabrication building. The crane will define the Park’s overhead space.

“In a backyard, people don’t sit on the open lawn,” says Tilo Driessen of the Vancouver Park Board. “They sit under a pergola, or on the deck; there’s always some

sense of enclosure or definition. The crane provides that. It almost turns that little park into a room, a beautiful marriage for heritage and recreational objectives.

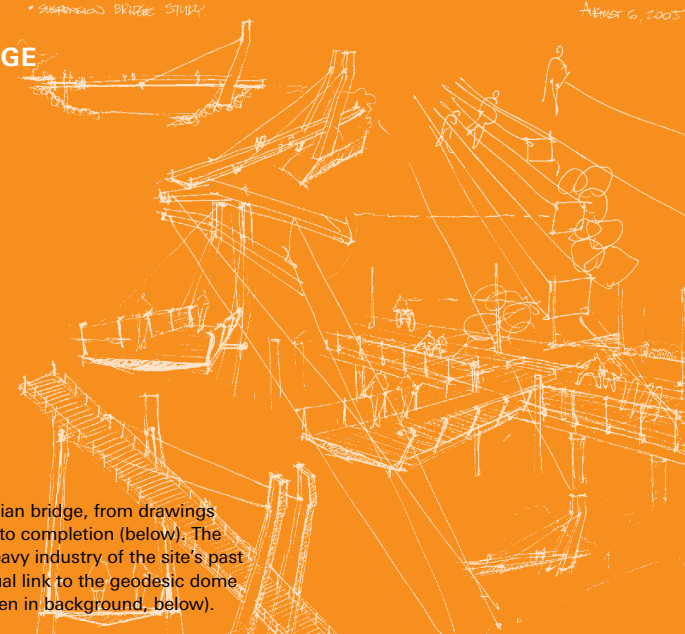
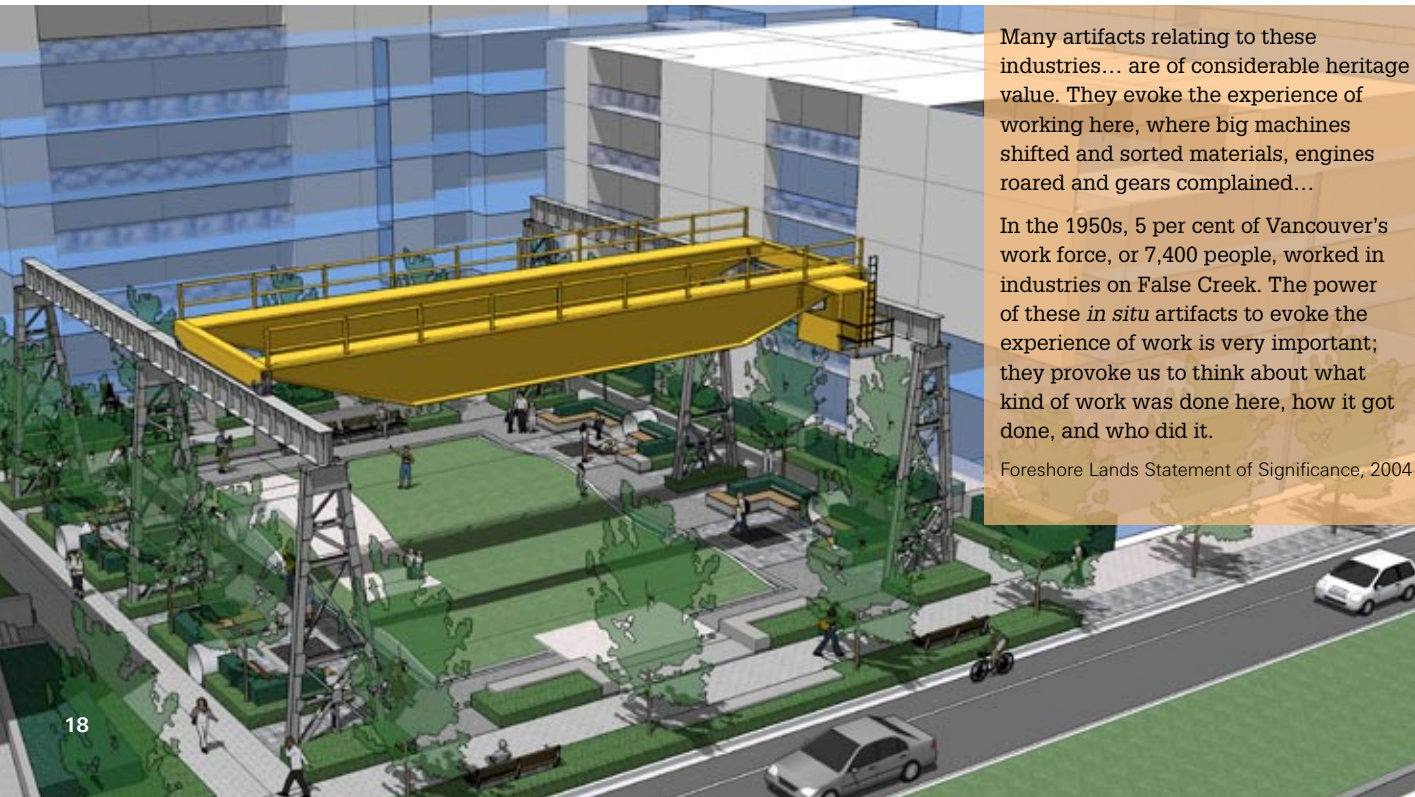
“It’s a little jewel of a park – I think people will love it.”

Pocket Park is designed for families, offering opportunities for imaginative play without formal playground equipment. The original Canron gantry crane, painted yellow, will be installed overhead to recall the site’s industrial heritage.

Many artifacts relating to these industries... are of considerable heritage value. They evoke the experience of working here, where big machines shifted and sorted materials, engines roared and gears complained...

In the 1950s, 5 per cent of Vancouver’s work force, or 7,400 people, worked in industries on False Creek. The power of these *in situ* artifacts to evoke the experience of work is very important; they provoke us to think about what kind of work was done here, how it got done, and who did it.

Foreshore Lands Statement of Significance, 2004



The “Canoe” pedestrian bridge, from drawings to installation (inset) to completion (below). The design evokes the heavy industry of the site’s past and also forms a visual link to the geodesic dome of Science World (seen in background, below).



FEATURE PROFILE

Wilco Landscape Westcoast Inc.

On any given day, you’ll find Wilco’s specialists leading projects ranging from a rooftop garden in Vancouver to a mine reclamation project in Ontario. With 17 years in BC and 50 years of history across Canada, the company is an expert in the construction of built landscapes.

At Olympic Village, Wilco built the entire pathway that snakes around the waterfront, including granite terraces, wooden piers, site furniture, handrails, bridges and lighting. In addition, Wilco constructed Habitat Island, an entirely man-made site providing habitat for wildlife.

Rob Maat, President and CEO of Wilco Westcoast, says the complexity of the project, with its integration of diverse elements, high level of detail and fast timeline, made it a welcome challenge.

“There were a lot of technical details, since most of the site was hard installations,” he says. “Everything was custom built, so we worked with the landscape architects to make sure there won’t be maintenance problems, that it will last, be durable, and so on.

“We try to be solutions oriented and not sit back and wait for the architect to figure it out. So we really liked this work. It was unique and challenging, and that’s what we look for in our projects.”

A signature installation along the waterfront, a 40-metre pedestrian bridge frames the tidal amphitheatre. The Canoe Bridge is designed to evoke the ribs of canoes and kayaks, celebrating the non-motorized boating area to its north. Its walkway is steel grating, allowing views to the water below, and creating fewer shadows on the water to maximize habitat value.

The bridge was built by Megatech Engineering Ltd. and installed by Wilco. Says Long, “They did a great job. The workmanship is phenomenal. The contractors are taking so much pride in what they’re doing. They worked really hard.”

