

ESSO HERITAGE BRICK PROGRAM

The **1986 World Exposition on Transportation and Communication**, or simply **Expo 86**, was a world's fair held in Vancouver from May 2 until October 13, 1986. The fair, the theme of which was "Transportation and Communication: World in Motion – World in Touch", coincided with Vancouver's centennial. Up until the late 1970s, the 173 acres (70 ha) site on False Creek where Expo was staged, was a former CPR rail yard and an industrial wasteland.

Those of you who were around at the time may remember the Esso Heritage Brick program, which was tied to the company's sponsorship of the Esso Roundhouse at Expo 86.

CPR Engine 374 pulled the first transcontinental passenger train into the city on May 23, 1887. The event heralded the completion of one of the greatest engineering feats of the century, a twin line of steel linking the new nation of Canada from coast to coast, ten years in construction.

In 1945, after many years of service, including the second World War, Engine 374 was finally retired. The engine was first placed in Kitsilano Park for all to see, and play on, but it suffered greatly from salt air and the passage of the seasons. In 1983, many dedicated citizens came to the engine's rescue and began the Herculean task of restoring the engine to its former glory. Read more on the [Roundhouse pavilion website](#).

With additional funds raised through the Esso Heritage Brick Program, the restoration was completed in time for Expo 86 where the refurbished engine was a prime attraction. A total of \$400,000 was raised for the refurbishing of the engine, by way of individuals who bought one brick or more for \$19.86 each, with their names engraved on each of their bricks. Volunteers, including some Esso employees, helped catalog the location of bricks and assisted Expo 86 visitors in locating their engraved bricks.

Due to changes made after Expo 86 when the Roundhouse was converted to a community centre, approximately 500 bricks were destroyed, but the vast majority (approximately 19,600 bricks) were preserved, although many were relocated. During COVID, pavilion volunteers catalogued the location of each. These are listed alphabetically by surname in the [link on our website](#).

If you purchased a brick, make a note of the row number and location number, and the next time you're in Vancouver, visit the [Engine 374 Pavilion](#) at the corner of Pacific and Davie and ask the helpful volunteers for assistance in locating your brick.