Vancouver's first permanent courthouse after the addition, opened in 1890 and fronted on Cambie and Hastings Streets. The courthouse was torn down in 1911, and the location became Victory Square after the Great War. The square incorporates the steps of the original courthouse.

Vancouver's Courthouses

THOMAS SORBY, who also designed the the first Hotel Vancouver, was the architect of the first courthouse built by Turnbull and Company of New Westminster at a cost of $18,000. The upper floor consisted of a single courtroom, the judge's office and a law library, while the bottom floor housed the county registrar, the timber inspector, an assessor and a janitor.

Themis, the Greek Goddess of Justice, by sculptor Jack Harman, stands on the 4th floor of Vancouver's Law Courts. The city's third courthouse was designed by world-renowned Vancouver architect Arthur Erickson in 1973.

During the construction phase, assessor A. E. Beck questioned its size, and by completion date the new courthouse proved to be too small and had to be enlarged by more than three times its original size. N. E. Hoffar designed the new addition, which was built by J. M. Luckie and Edward Cook at a cost of $47,000. The top of the addition was crowned with a raised cupola, on top of which stood a statue of Justice. Even with the new addition, Vancouver's first permanent courthouse had a short life span. In 1905 architect Francis M. Rattenbury won the contract to build the second courthouse.

A civic reception by Vancouver Mayor James Findlay at the new courthouse welcoming the Duke and Duchess of Connaught on 12 September 1912 proved to be a highlight in the city's pre-war era. As soon as the second courthouse opened for trials, the original building went under the wrecking ball and was torn down. At the end of the Great War the site became Victory Square, and a cenotaph was erected to commemorate the soldiers who had died in France and Belgium. By design or by coincidence, the site was directly across Hastings Street and opposite the Dominion Building. According to folklore, this beautiful historic structure, at one time the tallest building in the British Empire, was built with the Kaiser's money.

1 Hastings Mill
2 Flack Building
3 Inns of Court Building
4 First Courthouse
5 *The Province* Office
6 Victoria House Boarding School
7 Central School
8 City Hospital & Grounds

VIEW FROM THE TOP OF THE HOLY ROSARY CATHEDRAL. Looking northeast towards the intersection of Pender and Hamilton Streets clearly shows the original courthouse with the larger addition that was crowned with the cupola with the Statue of Justice, circa 1910.

Above

James Findlay was the first Vancouver mayor to wear the new gold civic chain of office at the official opening of the courthouse by the Duke and Duchess of Connaught on 12 September 1912. The ornate chain was designed by Henry Birks Jewellers. Wrought in 14-karat gold, the chain is of handsome design and splendid workmanship. It is composed of five shields that are each carved with designs depicting the five principal industries of the province: Forestry, Shipping, Manufacturing, Mining and Tourism.

Right

Mayor James Findlay welcomed the Duke and Duchess of Connaught to a civic reception at the newly-completed Vancouver Court House on 18 September 1912. The arrival of the "horseless carriage," the automobile, greatly altered the character of the royal tour. Only two teams of horses appear in this photo. The licence plate numbers on some of the cars can be clearly seen in pioneer Vancouver photographer Stuart Thomson's image, and from them one can determine that William J. Edgett of 1350 West 10th Avenue came in his Wonin automobile, and John C. Dill of 2466 West 6th Avenue came in his Hudson. Vancouver's military as well as local boy scouts turned out "in spit and polish" to welcome "The Duke," Queen Victoria's third son, who was at the time Canada's Governor General. The enthusiasm of the crowd can be measured by the 92 Union Jacks that can be counted in this picture.