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Lewis Street

Heritage Conservation Area | City of Victoria



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1. The History of Lewis Street



"A Woman Weaving a Blanket", Paul Kane, oil on canvas, Southeastern Vancouver Island, BC, 1849–1856, 18" x 29", Gift of Sir Edmund Osler.

1.1 FIRST NATIONS PRESENCE

Lewis Street Heritage Conservation Area is located in the homelands of the Lekwungen people, now known as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations. Specifically, Lewis Street is located in $sx^w\epsilon\eta x^w\epsilon\eta t\epsilon\eta\epsilon x^w$, (pronounced s-hweng hw-ung tongue-oo-hw) which the Lekwungen have inhabited for thousands of years prior to European contact. Numerous village sites and other sites of cultural importance are located in the surrounding area of the James Bay Peninsula. The Lekwungen connection to, and presence on, the land continues to this day.



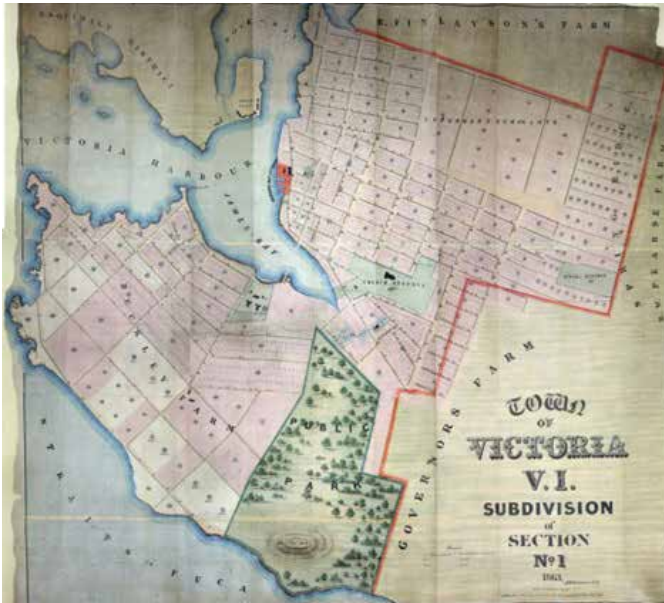
View S.E. across the harbour towards the James Bay Bridge from the Songhees Reserve, c. 1865. Ainslie Helmcken. City of Victoria Archives.



Camas was cultivated by the Lekwungen in the area that is now James Bay.

1.2 HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY FARM TO GRAND ESTATES

In 1843 the Hudson's Bay Company established Beckley Farm on the James Bay Peninsula as part of a network of farms that provided food and goods to Fort Victoria. As Victoria transitioned from fort to gold rush town to capital city, these farms were subdivided into grand estates. Lewis Street is located on the properties of two former estates: the Lewis Estate and Gladys Villa. The estate of Captain Herbert Lewis, built in 1878 and for whom Lewis Street is named, fronted along Dallas Road at the south end of the street. Lewis was a steamship captain for the Hudson's Bay Company. His wife, Mary, was the daughter of Edward Langford who managed some of the Company farms. Gladys Villa, built in 1876 for William Robinson, originally fronted Menzies Street and included the north end of the street. Robinson was a customs agent and broker. Both homes were demolished to make way for apartment buildings in the 1960s and 70s.



Subdivision map of Victoria, 1863. This map shows the beginning of the subdivision of Beckley Farm into the James Bay neighbourhood.



Gladys Villa, c. 1950. City of Victoria Archives.

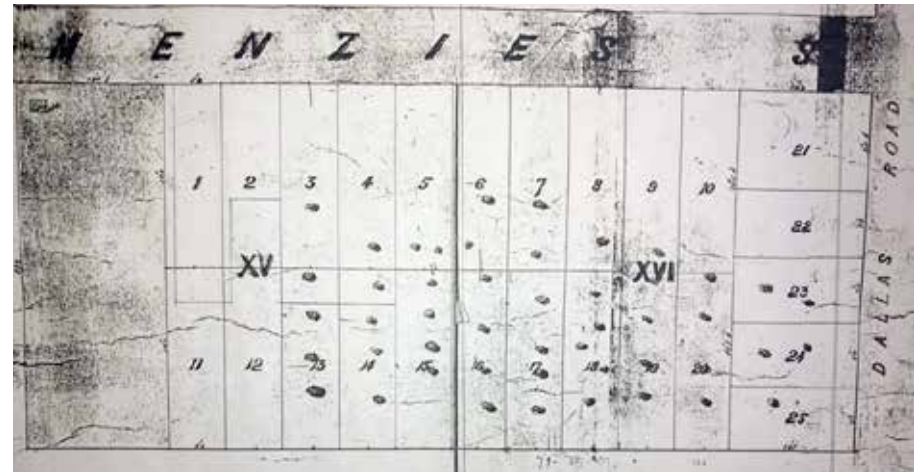


Captain Herbert George Lewis and Mrs. Mary Lewis (nee Langford). City of Victoria Archives.

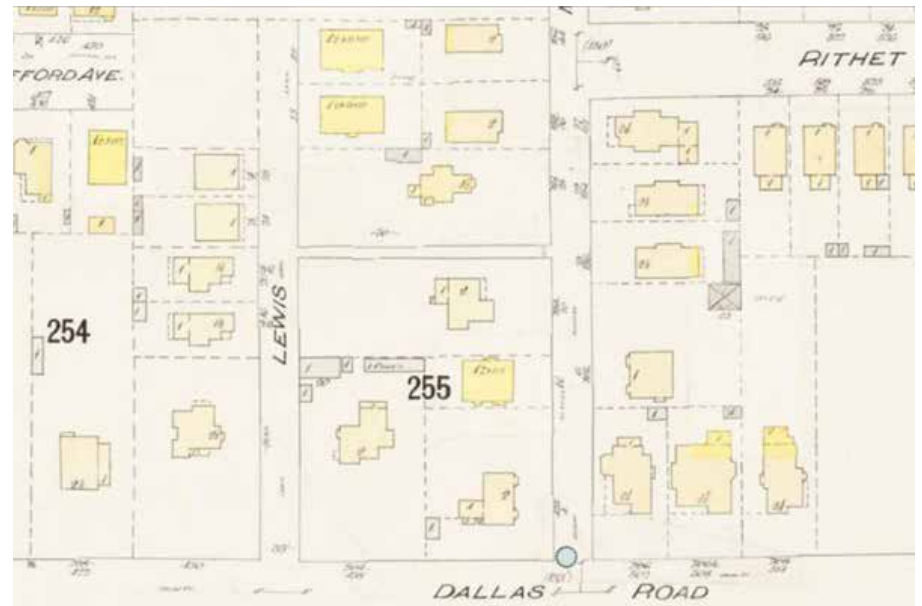
1.3 LEWIS ESTATE SUBDIVISION

Lewis Street was subdivided into its present form in two phases. The Lewis Estate was subdivided first, starting prior to 1895, with the current lot arrangement within the Heritage Conservation Area and many of the homes present by 1911. The road itself first appears in 1889, turning at what is now Brotchy Lane. It was extended past Brotchy Lane by 1891.

Lots in this subdivision were filled in one or two at a time, with modest homes for working families built in the popular styles of the time, including Queen Anne, Colonial Bungalow and Arts and Crafts. In a few cases, two neighbouring lots were developed in quick succession and as a result those homes share some similarities, though they are still distinct. For example, 35 and 39 Lewis Street were built in 1907 and 1908 respectively, and both are one-and-a-half storey bungalows with raised basements of almost the same proportions and positioning on their lots. However, they have different architectural styles as 39 Lewis Street is a Colonial Bungalow with Queen Anne influences and 35 Lewis Street is an Arts and Crafts style bungalow. These stylistic differences between the two properties are evident in details such as bay windows, porch columns and eaves brackets.



1872 survey of Block 15 and 16, part of which would become the eastern portion of the Lewis Estate subdivision.



Detail of 1909 Fire Insurance Map showing the first homes on the street following the subdivision of the Lewis Estate.



39 Lewis Street, built 1908.



50 Lewis Street, built 1912.



*35 Lewis Street,
built 1907.*



53 Lewis Street, built 1929.

1.4 PLAYFAIR, PLAYFAIR AND CRAMER (PP&C) SUBDIVISION

The subdivision of the Gladys Villa estate began in 1911 after brothers John and George Playfair and their cousin George Cramer purchased the estate and subdivided it into twelve lots fronting on both Lewis and Menzies Streets. The original subdivision plan brought the street up to its current terminus and included the footpath at the northern end of the street connecting to Menzies Street. The first home in this subdivision was built in 1912 at 50 Lewis Street and the last home in 1929 at 53 Lewis Street. Gladys Villa was moved to what was 66 Lewis Street and is now the parking lot for the apartment building at 45 Boyd Street to facilitate the development of the subdivision.

Similarly to the Lewis Estate subdivision, this subdivision was filled in over time with individually designed homes. Most of the surviving homes were built in the 1920s in varying interpretations of the Arts and Crafts style. George Cramer lived in both 50 and 53 Lewis Street immediately after they were first built in 1912 and 1929 respectively, before selling the homes the following years. John Playfair lived in 51 Lewis Street, built in 1925. The homes at 50 and 53 Lewis Street both retain many original features of Arts and Crafts styles, while 51 Lewis Street has been substantially altered and almost no original features remain.



Survey for PP&C subdivision, 1911.



Lewis Street

2. Statement of Significance

DESCRIPTION OF THE HISTORIC PLACE

Located north of Dallas Road, south of Niagara Street and west of Menzies Street in the James Bay neighbourhood, the Lewis Street Heritage Conservation Area is a cluster of fifteen one-and-a-half to two-and-a-half storey single-detached and converted homes. The area includes Lewis Park and is connected to Menzies Street and Luxton Street via three footpaths including Brotchy Lane.

HERITAGE VALUES

The Lewis Street Heritage Conservation Area has historical significance as an intact example of the gradual development of Victoria's neighbourhoods in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The layouts of the two subdivision phases are still evident on the street, with the lot proportions and rhythm largely unchanged since the Lewis and Playfair, Playfair and Cramer subdivisions were laid out in the 1890s and 1911 respectively. These subdivisions replaced the Lewis and Gladys Villa estates, which in turn had replaced the Hudson's Bay Company's Beckley Farm. This is emblematic of the progression of development in Victoria at the time, therefore contributing to Lewis Street's historic value.

The street also has architectural significance as a relatively intact streetscape of homes built in the popular styles of the early 20th century, including Queen Anne, Colonial Bungalow and a number of interpretations of the Arts and Crafts movement. Despite many different styles, the properties within the Heritage Conservation Area share a variety of common features such as scale, siting and massing, as well as window assemblies, recessed entries and decorative features.

The area embodies theme 1.3 of the Victoria Heritage Thematic Framework – Pioneer Farms to First Suburbs, as well as theme 5.1 Architectural Expression.

CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS

- Relatively small setbacks from the front property line of 5 metres or less
- One-and-a-half to two-and-a-half storey height
- Peaked roofs
- Generous proportion of wood framed glazing on front façades
- Raised basements
- Spacious covered front porches
- Wood siding
- Low fencing along front property lines
- Features emblematic of popular architectural styles of the first three decades of the 20th century, including but not limited to:
 - Angled and box bays
 - Sash, three-part and multi-light wood windows
 - Corbeled brick chimneys
 - Decorative columns
 - Gables and dormers with wood windows



- H Heritage Property
- D,H Designated, Heritage Property
- NH Non-Heritage Property

Map of Heritage and Non-Heritage Properties

3. Design Guidelines for New Buildings

Intent: To ensure that new buildings on Lewis Street are complementary to, and distinguishable from, existing homes. The guidelines permit a range of traditional and contemporary design responses that distinguish modern construction as ‘new’.

3.1 MASSING, SITING AND SCALE

- 3.1.1. Design new buildings with vertical rather than horizontal proportions, utilizing the depth of the lot.
- 3.1.2. Locate new buildings no more than approximately 6m from the front property line.
- 3.1.3. New building massing and form should be sensitive to and compatible with the surrounding context.

3.2 WINDOWS, DOORS AND ENTRANCES

- 3.2.1. Doors should be recessed into spacious covered front porches or entryways.
- 3.2.2. Incorporate a generous amount of glazing on the front façade.
- 3.2.3. Windows in pairs or groups of three or four are encouraged.
- 3.2.4. Divided light windows are encouraged. Glazing bars in new windows should be three-dimensional to create a sense of texture and depth.
- 3.2.5. Dormer windows, gable windows and/or skylights are encouraged to improve the livability of attic spaces.
- 3.2.6. Casement or sash windows are supported. Window surrounds can include casings with a drip cap, sill and apron for aesthetics and waterproofing.

3.3 ROOF PROFILE

- 3.3.1. Gable, cross-gabled or hipped roofs are encouraged.



Siding possibilities for new homes.

3.4 EXTERIOR CLADDING

- 3.4.1. Horizontally oriented cladding, including beveled siding and fibre cement cladding, is encouraged. Board and batten style siding and shake siding are also supported.



27 Lewis Street was built in the 1990s and fits well within the street. Its form, scale and massing are all sympathetic to the context, and the details and features such as the angled bay and covered front entry are modern interpretations of common features of the historic homes on the street.



Kipp Architecture. Photo: Maxwell Mackenzie



Hayes Barton Homes



Teale Architecture. Photo: Ryan Garvin



Johnston Architects. Photo: Ed Sozinho & Kameron Selby



Eric Aust Architect. Photo: Ryan Garvin



*While it does not have a porch, this infill home in Fairfield would fit well on Lewis Street with its proportions, use of glazing and materials.
Jesse Baidwan Developments*



Scala Designs



4. Alterations to Existing Buildings

Intent: To ensure that alterations to heritage properties are sensitive and compatible and follow the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*.

4.1 WINDOWS

- 4.1.1 New windows should be located on side or rear elevations and aligned with existing windows in location and proportion.

4.2 DOORS

- 4.2.1 Where a replacement door is proposed, ensure the design is era-appropriate and consistent with the style of the building.

4.3 ROOFS

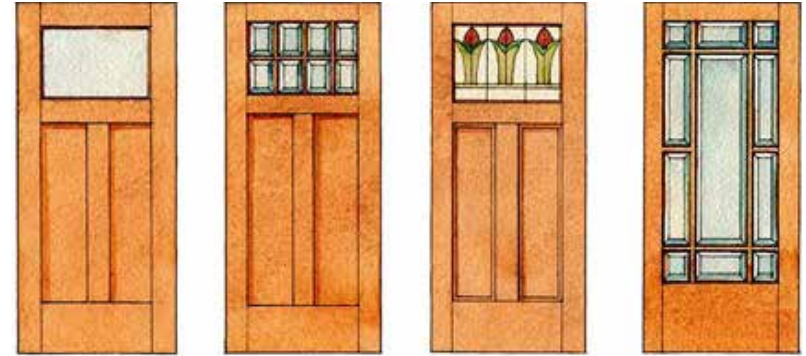
- 4.3.1 Shingle style roofing is preferred for new roofs.

4.4 SOLAR PANELS AND SUSTAINABLE TECHNOLOGY

- 4.4.1 Locate solar panels or other technology installations discretely on south facing roof slopes.
- 4.4.2 Set solar panels back from the front elevation and situate them so that the roof creates a frame around the panels.

4.5 CHIMNEYS

- 4.5.1 Chimneys visible from the street are character-defining elements and should be retained.



Possible door styles. A natural-coloured door is not required. Rob Leanna.

4.6 ADDITIONS

- 4.6.1 New additions should be distinguishable from the original building and should be discretely designed to be minimally visible above the ridgeline of the roof from the adjacent sidewalk.

4.7 SKYLIGHTS

- 4.7.1 Skylights should be positioned away from the street in discrete locations.



Possible areas for rooftop solar arrays



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