

2025

Residential Heritage Guidelines

Victoria 2050 OCP Schedule 2J

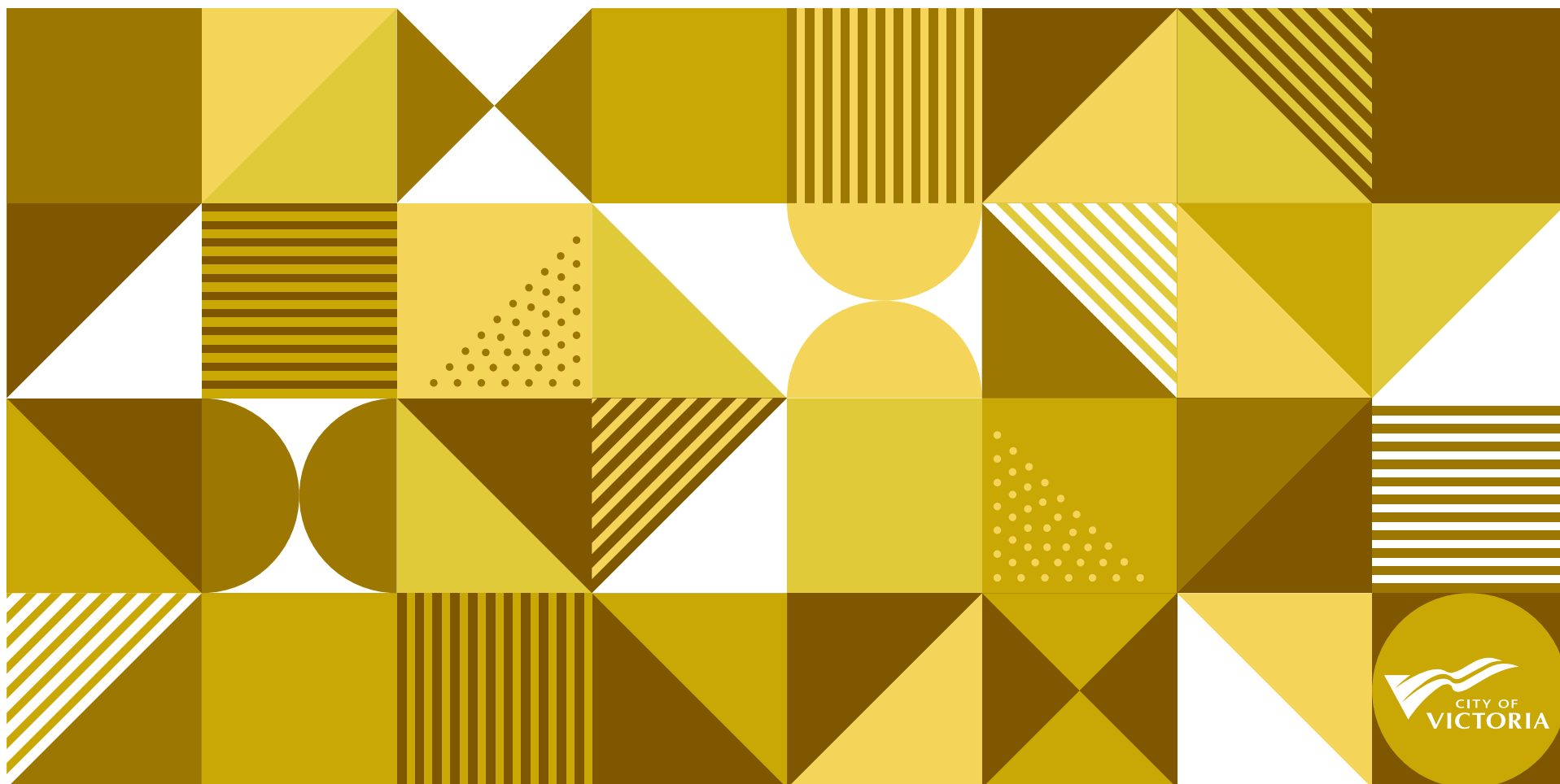


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1. Overview

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Victoria's residential neighbourhoods are important contributors to the character of the city, while each having distinct characteristics. Heritage Conservation Areas (HCAs) are distinct districts within neighbourhoods that have special shared heritage value and character. As the city grows and changes and neighbourhoods necessarily continue to densify as they always have, HCAs and design guidelines are useful tools to manage that change in a sustainable, community-centred way. Specifically, these Residential Heritage Conservation Area Guidelines articulate the heritage value and character-defining elements of each individual district within the HCA, and provide guidelines and examples to encourage redevelopment that contributes positively to the fabric and character of Victoria's residential neighbourhoods.

1.2. HOW TO USE THE GUIDELINES

An individual Statement of Significance has been prepared for each district and is provided below. The Statement of Significance is used to identify the heritage character and value of the district and identify those character-defining elements that contribute to the shared character. This provides a rationale for determining which properties within each district are heritage properties, and what features of those properties should be preserved. The Statements of Significance should be used as a starting point for projects to inform and guide sensitive and distinguishable responses to the context, in conjunction with the Guidelines section.

Some properties within the HCAs are subject to individual Heritage Designations and may have individual Statements of Significance. These should be considered in tandem with the Statement of Significance applying to the district.

The Guidelines section contains general guidance for all of the districts for both new development and alterations to heritage properties. In each section, there are also district-specific guidelines when relevant, immediately following the general guidelines.

The Statements of Significance and Guidelines do not limit or alter Official Community Plan Urban Structure designations or zoning regulations.



Looking towards 527 Esquimalt Road. City of Victoria Archives Item M10042.

2. Statements of Significance

2.1. AVALON-HUNTINGTON

DESCRIPTION OF THE HISTORIC PLACE

The Avalon-Huntington Heritage Conservation Area is a collection of 27 properties built in the late 19th and early 20th century in the James Bay neighbourhood, including the entirety of Avalon Road and Huntington Place, and the adjacent portions of Government and Toronto Streets. The Area also includes the James Bay Inn at 270 Government Street.



View of a window detail on 603 Toronto Street, looking south.

HERITAGE VALUE

The Avalon-Huntington Heritage Conservation Area has aesthetic value as a good collection of the dominant residential architectural styles at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, including examples of Italianate, Queen Anne and Arts and Crafts styles. The homes in the area tend to be more modest in scale and size compared to other parts of James Bay and Victoria more broadly, which further contributes to its aesthetic and historic value.

The area also has social value through the connections of early residents to the local James Bay industries such as fishing and shipping. Other early residents were employed at nearby factories including the paint factory that was located at Laurel Point.

This area embodies the following themes of the Victoria Heritage Framework: Human Settlement, Cultural Exchange and Gateway Economy.



View of the front elevations of, from left to right, 610, 614 and 616 Avalon Road, looking northwest.

CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS

- 1 ½ to 2 ½ storey height
- Peaked roofs with gables and dormers
- Wood siding
- Wood windows
- Bay windows, particularly on front and side elevations
- Corbeled brick chimneys
- Small front yard setbacks



View of the front elevation of the James Bay Inn at 270 Government Street, looking southwest.



View of the front elevation of 314 Huntington Place, looking west.

2.2. BATTERY STREET

DESCRIPTION OF THE HISTORIC PLACE

A collection of late 19th and early 20th century homes along with mid 20th century infill apartments and condominiums along the full length of Battery Street in the James Bay neighbourhood, and including adjacent properties on Douglas, Olympia and Government Streets.

HERITAGE VALUE

The Battery Street Heritage Conservation Area has social and historical value as an intact example of the development of Victoria's neighbourhoods over time. The area was originally the Hudson's Bay Company's Beckley Farm, which was then subdivided into large lots for grand homes such as 617 Battery Street, starting in the mid to late 19th century. The grand homes were then subdivided further in the late 19th and early 20th century into the

general lot arrangement seen today with smaller homes, largely built during the 1903–1913 national building boom. In the mid to late 20th century, the infill development of condominiums and apartment buildings on consolidated lots further developed Victoria's neighbourhoods, including on Battery Street.

Aesthetic value is also present, as the majority of homes on the street are high quality, intact examples of popular late 19th and early 20th century architectural styles including Queen Anne, Italianate and Arts and Crafts.

The area embodies the following themes of the Victoria Heritage Framework: Human Settlement, Cultural Exchange and Gateway Economy.



View of the front and south side elevation of the Beacon Lodge at 30 Douglas Street, looking northwest.



View of the front elevation view of 670 Battery Street, looking northwest.

CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS

- Peaked roofs with gables and dormers
- Wood siding, including drop siding and shingle siding
- Wood windows, including multilight, double hung, stained glass and art glass
- Bay windows on front and side elevations
- Stone and other natural materials, used as both primary and secondary building materials
- Stone walls along street frontages
- Corbelled brick chimneys
- Decorative wood detailing such as brackets, finials and bargeboards



View of the front elevation of 626 Battery Street and front and west side elevation of 630 Battery Street, looking northeast.



View of the front and east elevation of 674 Battery Street, looking north.



View of the front elevation of 20 Douglas Street, looking northwest.

2.3. CATHERINE STREET

DESCRIPTION OF THE HISTORIC PLACE

The two northernmost blocks of Catherine Street and a portion of Arthur Currie Lane in the Victoria West neighbourhood, including 23 properties.

HERITAGE VALUE

The Catherine Street area has historical and social value as an intact example of the development of not only Victoria's neighbourhoods in general but also the Victoria West neighbourhood specifically. The street contains grand homes built for the owners of industrial businesses located in the neighbourhood, such as factories and shipyards located along the Gorge Waterway and Inner Harbour, alongside slightly later more modest housing built and lived in by the employees of those businesses.



View of the front elevation of 1021 Catherine Street, looking east.

This social value is further enhanced by the familial connections along the street. It was not uncommon for home owners to subdivide their lots to build a home for one of their children, who often married the child of a neighbour, and it was also common for extended families to live next door or down the street from each other and work together.

The area also has aesthetic value as a good collection of popular architectural styles from the late 19th and early 20th century, including Queen Anne, Italianate and vernacular workers' cottages.

This area embodies the following themes of the Victoria Heritage Framework: Human Settlement, Cultural Exchange and Gateway Economy.



View of the south side and front elevations of 1020 Catherine Street, looking northwest.

CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS

The character-defining elements of the Catherine Street Heritage Conservation Area include:

- Design elements common among late 19th and early 20th century residential architecture, including but not limited to:
 - Peaked roofs
 - Gables
 - Dormers
 - Covered front porches with decorative columns
 - Bay windows
 - Wood siding
 - Wood windows
 - Corbelled chimneys
 - Shingle and shake siding details
- 1 ½ to 2 ½ storey height.
- Proximity to and relationship with Banfield Park and the Gorge Waterway
- Park like street experience with mature trees and front gardens, enhanced by a mature boulevard in the centre of the 1100 block of Catherine Street.
- Rock walls along property lines throughout the area.



View of the front elevations of, from left to right, 1115 and 1109 Catherine Street, looking east.



View of the front elevation of 1116 Catherine Street, looking west.



View of the north side and front elevations of, from left to right, 1128 and 1140 Arthur Currie Lane, looking south.

2.4. LEWIS STREET

DESCRIPTION OF THE HISTORIC PLACE

Located north of Dallas Road, south of Niagara Street and west of Menzies Street in the James Bay neighborhood, the Lewis Street Heritage Conservation Area is a cluster of fifteen 1 ½ to 2 ½ 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.



View of the front elevation of 53 Lewis Street, looking east.

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 the following themes of the Victoria Heritage Framework-Human Settlement, as well as Cultural Exchange.



View of the front elevation of 35 Lewis Street, opposite Lewis Street Park, looking east.

CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS

- Relatively small setbacks from the front property line of 5m or less
- 1 ½ to 2 ½ storey height
- Peaked roofs
- Generous proportion of 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 windows
 - Corbeled brick chimneys
 - Decorative columns
 - Gables and dormers with wood windows



View of the south side and front elevations of 44 Lewis Street, looking north.



View of the front and north side elevations of, from left to right, 43 and 39 Lewis Street, looking southeast.



View of the north side and front elevations of 19 Lewis Street, looking southeast along Brochy Lane.

2.5. ROBERT STREET

DESCRIPTION OF THE HISTORIC PLACE

Located south of Esquimalt Road and the E&N Rail Trail, the Robert Street Heritage Conservation Area is an enclave of fourteen 1.5-storey single detached and converted houses adjacent to Rainbow Park, the Songhees Walkway and the shoreline of Victoria West. The area includes one house on Seaforth Street.



View of the front elevation of 230 Robert Street, looking west.

HERITAGE VALUE

The Robert Street heritage conservation area has historical and aesthetic value for its unique juxtaposition of Victorian and Edwardian era homes built between 1888 and 1903, and the Minimal Traditional homes built between 1939 and 1945 under federal housing legislation of the late depression era. The Minimal Traditional-style houses have two-tone colour schemes, smooth stucco walls, fluid entrance details and simple fenestration in contrast to the polychromatic, textured Victorian houses with their turrets, finials, broad porches with classical columns, carved brackets and other eccentric decorations. The area is a tangible expression of Victoria West's urban development from a collection of large homes on expansive landscaped properties to an industrial employment centre edged with suburbs for working class families. The area displays the evolution of the single detached home from an exclusive high-end commodity in the early 1900s, to the template for middle class housing in the postwar era. This shift was enabled when the federal government intervened in the housing market through the Dominion Housing Act of 1935 and subsequent National Housing Act of 1938.

This area embodies the following themes of the Victoria Heritage Framework: Human Settlement, Cultural Exchange and Gateway Economy.



View of the north side elevation of 242 Robert Street, looking south.

CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS

- regular pattern of rectangular lots with frontages of approximately 15 metres (50 feet)
- spacious front yards and generous front yard setbacks
- residential development that reflects the historical evolution of Victoria West from a wealthy and exclusive neighbourhood to one with a diverse mix of working-class industrial and railroad employees
- consistent pattern of pitched roofs including cross-gabled, hipped and pitched roofs, typically with at least one front-facing gable
- consistent pattern of low-scale, detached dwellings with horizontal massing
- architectural details included those illustrated on the following pages
- high degree of livability achieved through generous side yard setbacks and low scale construction
- the culturally significant King Apple tree in the rear yard of 223 Robert Street



View of the front elevation of 614 Seaforth Street, looking south.



View of the front elevation of 206 Robert Street looking south to the Victoria Harbour.



View of the front elevation of 255 Robert Street, looking east.

3. Design Guidelines for New Buildings

Intent: To ensure that new buildings 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. New buildings should be sited on properties so they have similar setbacks as adjacent heritage buildings. Avoid siting new buildings significantly closer to the street than adjacent buildings.

3.1.2. New building heights should be sensitive to the surrounding context, ensuring heritage buildings remain the primary streetscape experience. Strategies could include:

- Stepbacks, increasing height away from the street and/or adjacent heritage buildings.
- Rooflines and massing that minimize the appearance of height from the public realm.
- Carefully located balconies and rooftop amenities to minimize the appearance of height from the public realm.
- The use of colour and materials to help upper storeys appear less prominent than the heritage buildings.

3.2. WINDOWS, DOORS AND ENTRANCES

3.2.1. Doors should be recessed into spacious covered front porches or entryways.

3.2.2. Windows in pairs or groups of three or four are encouraged.

3.2.3. Divided light windows are encouraged. Glazing bars in new windows should be 3-dimensional to create a sense of texture and depth.

3.2.4. Dormer windows are encouraged to improve the livability of attic spaces.

3.2.5. Casement or sash windows are supported. Window surrounds can include casings with a drip cap, sill and apron for aesthetics and waterproofing.



The Narrow Gate Architecture Ltd.

3.3. ROOF PROFILE

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

3.4. EXTERIOR CLADDING

3.4.1. Horizontally oriented cladding, including fibre cement cladding, is encouraged. Board and batten style siding, beveled siding and shake siding are also supported. 3.5 Additional Guidelines for Battery Street



Stolon Studios.



This project would be a good fit on Robert Street, and the roofline and massing strategy would also work well in the other districts. Studio Libeskind.



Unfold. Photo by Hybrid Studio.



Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group



Formwerks.



Johnston Architects. Photo by Ed Sozinho & Kameron Selby.



Christine Lintott Architects.



Waechter Architecture.



Kipp Architecture. Photo by Maxwell Mackenzie.



Rode Architects.



Polyphon Architecture and Design.



Hayes Barton Homes.

Allied8.



Above: The varied roofline and massing, and use of high-quality materials as modern versions of historic features make this project a great fit in all Residential HCAs. DAU Studio.



This infill project uses the roofline and angled massing to minimize the appearance of the four storey massing behind. MWA Architects.



HTA Design.



Green Hammer. Photo by Bill Purcell.



Office JT.

3.5. ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR BATTERY STREET

3.5.1. High quality, natural materials and design features are encouraged, including wood cladding and natural stone elements.

3.6. ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR CATHERINE STREET

3.6.1. Consider front yard landscaping to contribute to the park-like feel of the district through careful and varied planting and landscape elements such as stone walls.



This multi-unit infill matches the front landscaping design and elements to the neighbouring heritage properties and would be a good fit on Catherine Street with the use of stone and varied planting. Hybrid Architecture.

3.7. ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR LEWIS STREET

- 3.7.1. Locate new buildings no more than 4m from the front property line.
- 3.7.2. Incorporate a generous amount of glazing on the front facade.



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.

3.8. ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR ROBERT STREET

3.8.1. Doors should be slightly off centre or centred in the facade, recessed into an entryway or an open porch



Examples of compatible new doors.

3.8.2. Solid doors or doors with a transom light in the upper portion are encouraged. It is recommended that glazing occupy no more than three quarters of the surface.

3.8.3. Doors with a divided light transom and three-dimensional glazing bars are encouraged, however leaded glass is discouraged.

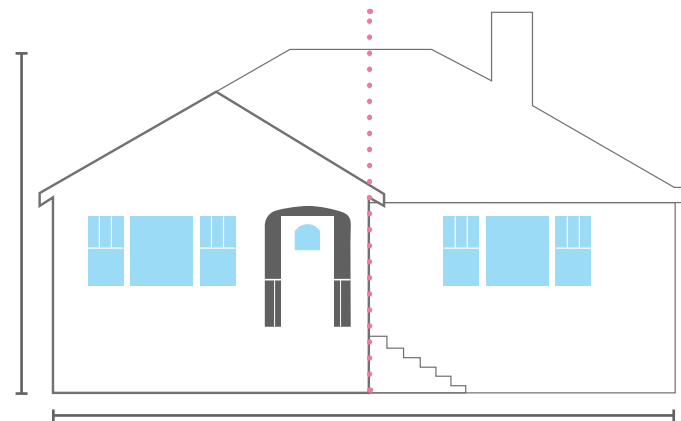
3.8.4. Picture windows are encouraged.

3.8.5. Smooth surfaced cladding such as stucco or horizontally oriented cladding, including fibre cement cladding, is encouraged. Board and batten style siding is also supported.

3.8.6. Garages should be integral to the facade or separate from the main dwelling and located behind the front wall. Projecting garages are discouraged.

3.8.7. Garage doors should feature transom lights to visually break up the upper portion.

Assymetrical facade composition balanced around the centreline



New buildings on Robert Street should have a horizontal scale, with windows arranged in pairs or threes, and entries should be recessed similar to existing houses on Robert Street (i.e., 255 Robert Street.)



A modern cottage by McCown Design in Mobile, Alabama presents a smooth textured facade with prominent window and door headers.



Modern carriage-style integral garage with a transom.



This house in Saanich, B.C. features a cross gabled roof design with front facing gables, a dormer window in the roof and windows arranged in pairs or threes. The window arrangements here are not picture windows since the middle pane should be undivided to create a view that appears like a picture from within the house. Vinyl windows such as those used on this house are discouraged since the simulated muntins produce a flat effect. Despite these minor points, a house like this would fit in well on Robert Street.



Cambie Village Duplex by Avera Developments, Vancouver, B.C.

4. Alterations to Existing Buildings

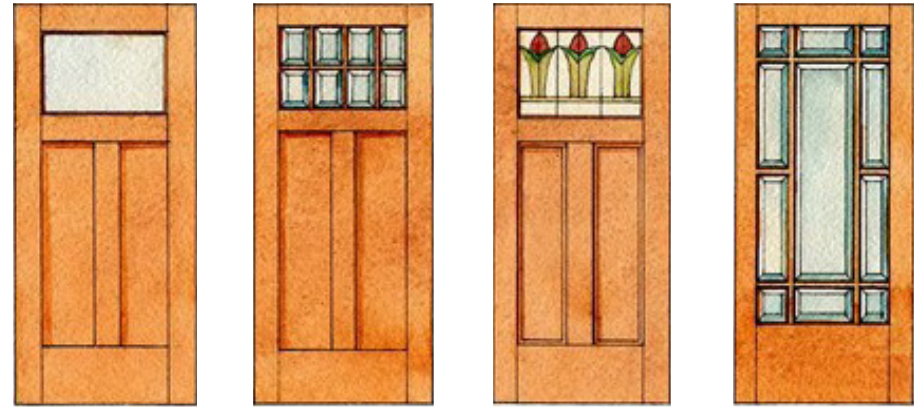
Intent: To ensure that alterations to heritage properties are sensitive and compatible and follow the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.

4.1. 4.1 WINDOWS

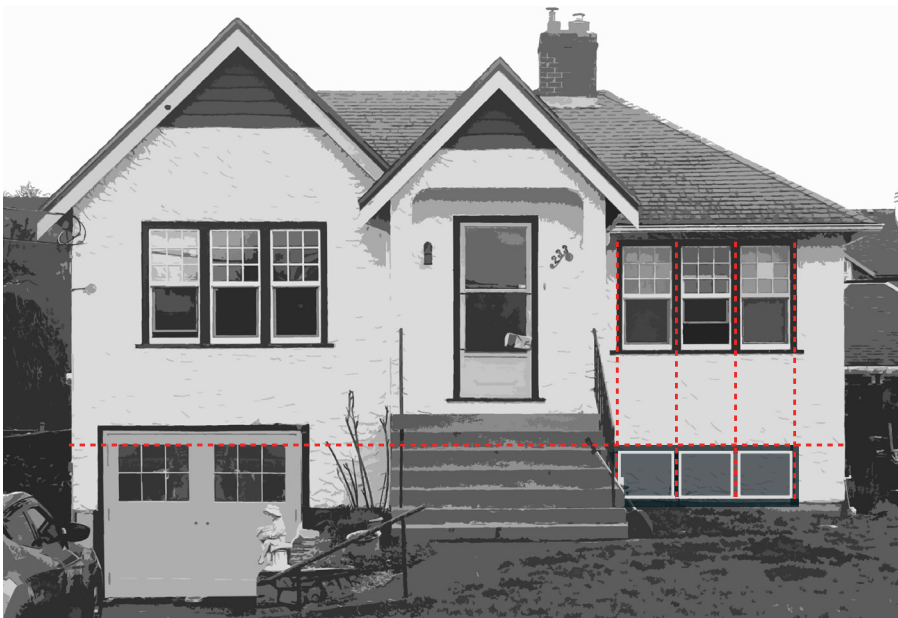
4.1.1. New windows should be wood, located on side or rear elevations and aligned with existing windows in location and proportion.

4.2. 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.



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

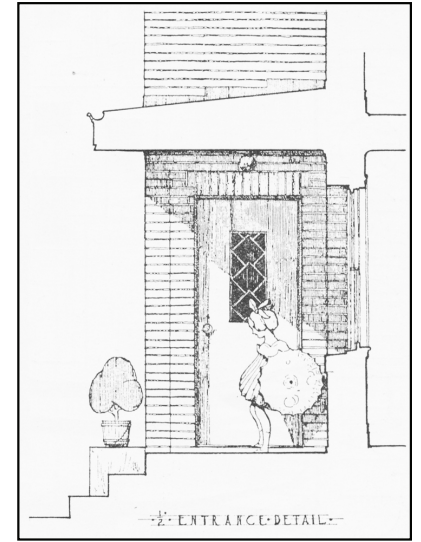
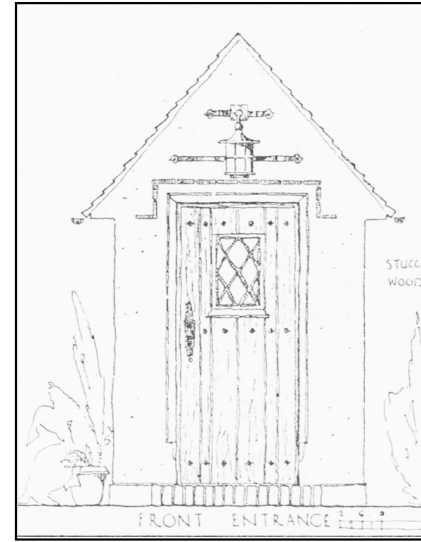
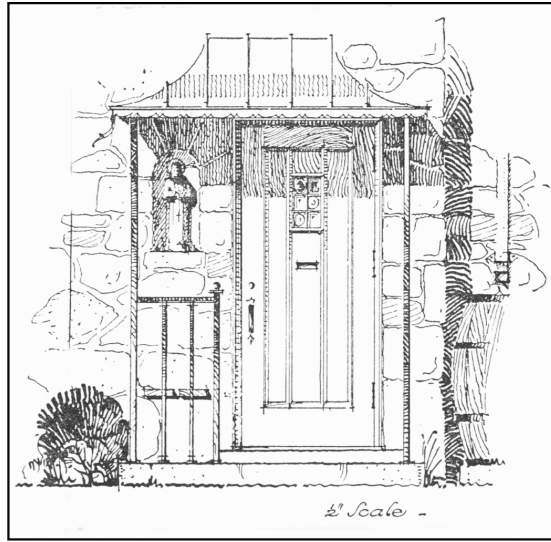
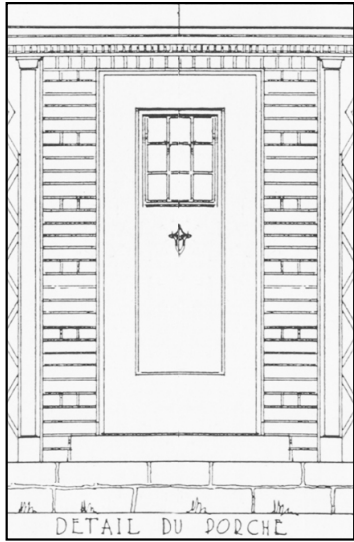


Align new basement windows with upper storey windows and include the same number of vertical divisions.



Sample doors.





Four door designs from submissions to the Dominion Housing Act Small House Competition, 1936.
 From left to right: Hugues Desrosiers, J.C. Druin, W. F. Williams-523 2, R. G. Heughan.

4.3. ROOFS

4.3.1. Shingle style roofing is preferred for new roofs.

4.4. BALCONY AND STAIR RAILINGS

4.4.1. When modifying balcony or stair railings for code compliance, consider affixing a discrete secondary rail above or inset from the existing rail. Complete replacement is discouraged.

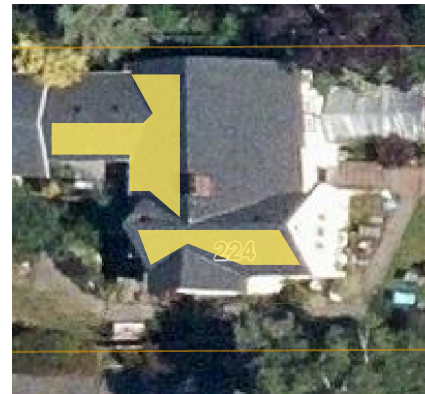


Heritage Consultant Stuart Stark's design for a code compliant railing on 1139 Burdett Street, which uses a simple pipe rail extending from the house to the newel post.

4.5. SOLAR PANELS AND SUSTAINABLE TECHNOLOGY

4.5.1. Locate solar panel or other technology installations discretely on south facing roof slopes.

4.5.2. Set solar panels back from the front elevation and situate them so that the roof creates a "frame" around the panels.



Possible areas for rooftop solar arrays.

4.6. CHIMNEYS

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

4.7. SKYLIGHTS

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

4.8. ADDITIONS

4.8.1. New additions should be distinguishable from the original building and should be discretely and compatibly designed so that the heritage building is the primary experience from the adjacent sidewalk.



Above and Right: While the addition to this heritage building in Cambridge, Massachusetts is visible from the street, the massing, material and colour choices result in a project that is compatible and subordinate to the heritage buildings on the site and adjacent properties. Bruner/Cott. Photos by Robert Benson Photography.





This addition extends the existing cross gabled portion of the roof into the rear yard.



An L-shaped addition.



A flat roof addition.



This project in Vancouver included the consolidation of two lots, the restoration and conversion of a heritage home and multi-unit infill development beside and to the rear of the existing home. Architrix.

4.9. ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR ROBERT STREET

4.9.1. Windows of heritage properties not subject to individual heritage designation may be modified with double glazed units, provided the new units replicate the design, operation and number of window divisions of the original.

4.9.2. Basement level windows on side or rear elevations are preferred over the front elevation. Align new windows with upper storey windows.

4.9.3. For Minimal Traditional homes, maintaining original wrought iron is encouraged. When modifying or replacing a staircase, simple designs are preferred for railings. Wrought iron or black painted aluminum railings are acceptable.

4.9.4. For Minimal Traditional houses, chimneys are not prominent features and removal is supported.



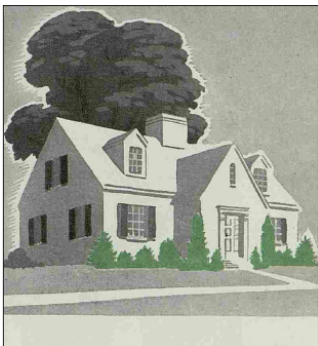
Above and Left: Victorian and Edwardian Gardens often featured gravel walks held in with cedar boards. Climbing plants were often found on porches – for food (like scarlet runner beans); or for beauty (like ivy or honeysuckle). Climbing plants were frequently used for shading verandahs during hot summers. Flowerbeds, often containing scented flowers, were dense around porches, where the fragrance could be enjoyed.

4.9.5. Design rear additions to avoid impacts to culturally significant trees such as the King apple trees.

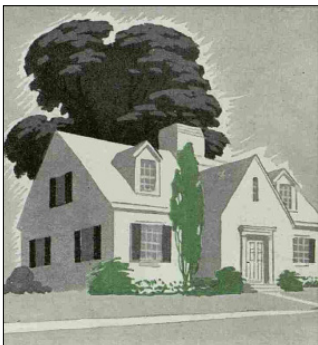
4.9.6. For Minimal Traditional houses, foundation plantings of juniper and rhododendrons are encouraged.

4.9.7. For Victorian era houses, naturalistic front yard landscape designs are encouraged.

4.9.8. Select tree, shrub and ground cover species with natural or cultural significance.

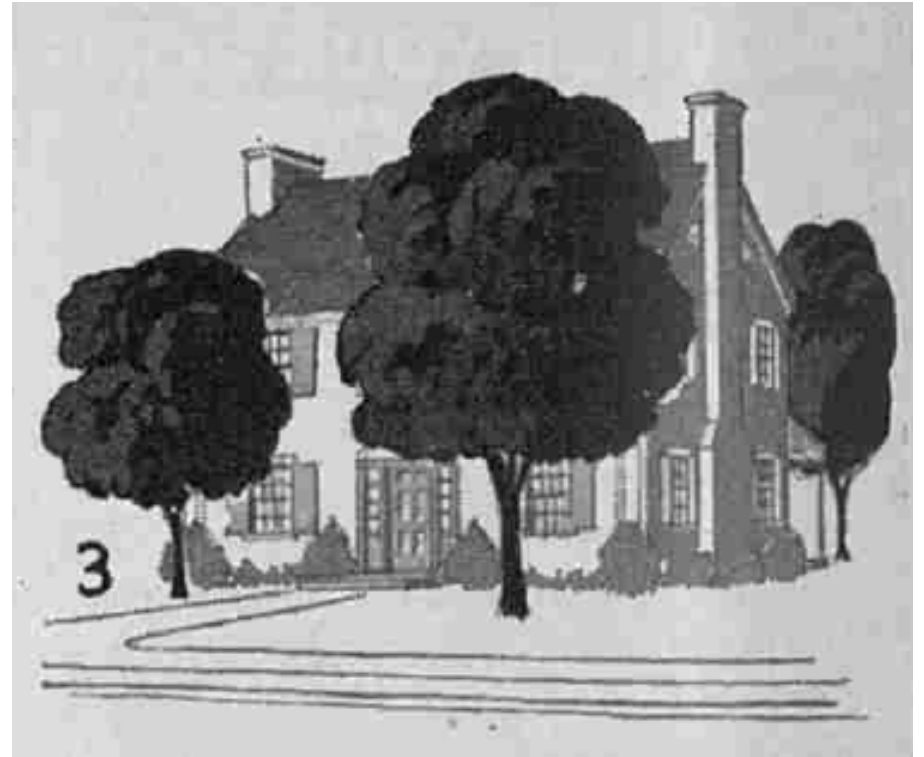


Always Good: *In this planting, emphasis is on the doorway, a detail of the architecture. The evergreens or shrubs used here should vary in skyline, with a crescendo of planting which leads definitely to the tall evergreens accenting the door. To fill the space between the principal evergreens or shrubs at the corners, use smaller perennials and low-growing shrubs.*



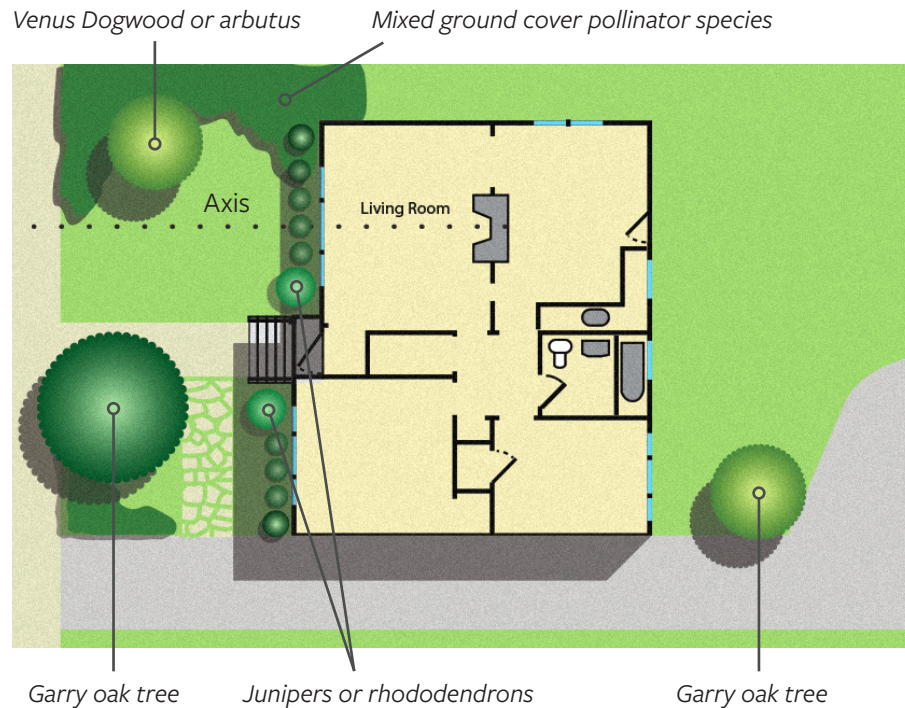
Very Good: *“...the prominent accent from the poplar at the corner...seems to set the house back into a cozier setting...shrub planting is here used very sparsely, but a small area for flowers is planned...”*

From “Is Your Planting Custom Made or Mill-Run” by Alfred Hottes, Better Homes and Gardens, May 1940

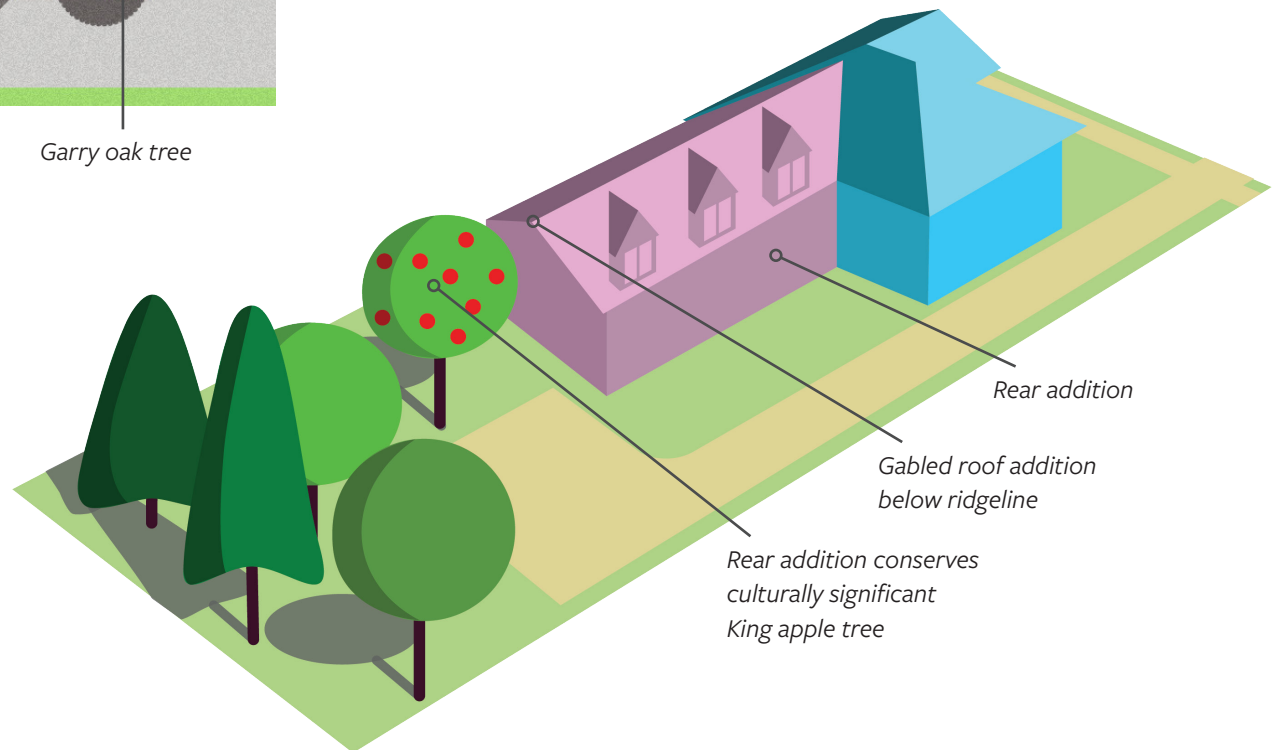


“The large front tree, set well out from the house...arches over the entrance door, obscures some of the windows and breaks the rooflines. The smaller tree on the left, set rather close to the house to offset the size of the big tree and viewed from the street needs background. This can be given by medium or higher trees planted at the rear of the house as part of the garden landscape. These background masses needn’t be solid. They may be sprays seen from the front in such a way as to soften the lines of the house roof.”

From “Where Should I Plant that Tree” by Howard Sebold, Better Homes and Gardens, April 1939.



An example front yard landscape plan for a Minimal Traditional house. Plantings at the edges of the lawn create an oval of open space aligned with the axis of the picture window in the living room. Perimeter plantings block out visual distractions and views of neighbouring properties. Trees are positioned in accordance with the diagram on the previous page.



Example Species



Venus Dogwood

A native flowering tree that grows up to four metres tall.



Rhododendrons

Rhododendron is popular for its beautiful, fragrant flowers and ornamental leaves. There are over 1,000 different species.



Camas

Yields beautiful blue lilies in April/May. The camas bulb was the main starch food of the Lekwungen People until 150 years ago.



Garry Oak

The only native oak species to British Columbia, Garry oaks are endangered and protected under the City's Tree Protection Bylaw. They can reach 15 metres tall when mature.



Arbutus

6–30 metres tall. First Nations people used the bark and leaves of the arbutus in traditional medicine. Bark was used to treat cuts and wounds and the inner bark to make dresses. Tannin in bark was used to tan and cure hides.

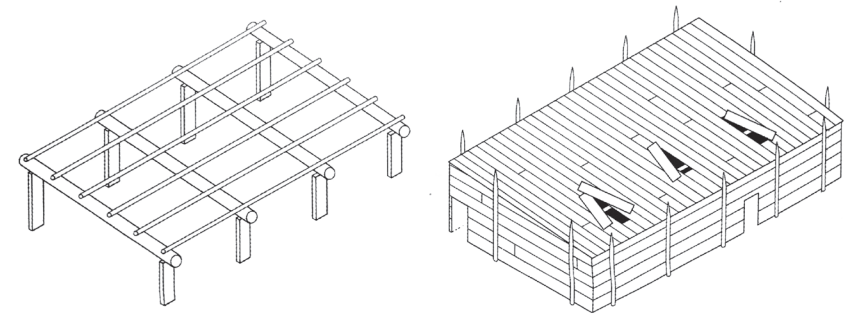
Appendix A: Robert Street History

A.1. FIRST NATIONS PRESENCE

The Robert Street heritage conservation area is located on the homelands of the ɫəkwəŋən (Lekwungen) People, known today as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations. There are many sites along Victoria's shoreline that are culturally significant to the Lekwungen People.

After the founding of Fort Victoria in 1843, many Lekwungen families gathered in a village on the shore of Victoria West, which was officially designated a reserve in 1853. It was around this time that the families came to be referred to as Songhees, an anglicized pronunciation of one of the family groups.¹

In 1911, the Songhees came under pressure from the City, provincial and federal governments and negotiated a financial settlement to relocate to a new reserve in Esquimalt.



Lekwungen style shed houses. Illustration by Karen B. Achoff.



"A Woman Weaving a Blanket", Paul Kane, oil on canvas, Southeastern Vancouver Island, B.C., 1849-1856, 18"x29", Gift of Sir Edmund Osler.



First bay east of Lime Bay, Songhees Reserve, Catalogue No. 1684, PN6824, RBCM, Indigenous Collections. Robert Street is located beyond the far shore. This bay (now Cooperage Place in Victoria West) was infilled for development. Note: Image has been cropped from original.



Painting of the Old Songhees Village located east of Robert Street, created by artist Paul Kane, 1847, Stark Museum of Art, Orange, Texas.
Bequest of H.J. Lutcher Stark, 1965.

A.2. EARLY DEVELOPMENT AND SUBDIVISION

Robert Street is named after the original developer of Victoria West, Robert “John” Russell (b. Edinburgh, 1832–1903), a former Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) employee. Robert sailed to Victoria in 1853 where he spent 10 years operating a mill. In 1864, he bought Section 31 (103.5 acres) from the HBC. Section 31 was a vertically oriented country lands parcel created in Joseph Pemberton’s 1852 plan for Victoria. The lands extended from the shoreline at the foot of Robert and Russell Streets, north to Craigflower Road. The Songhees reserve was located east of Russell’s lands. In 1879, Russell subdivided the lands into lots called Springfield Estates, named after his family home, Springfield. Springfield included a barn, carriage house and outdoor dance pavilion.²



Close-up of map at right showing Section 31 of the Esquimalt District.



1860 Map of the South Eastern Districts of Vancouver island, Rudolph D’heureuse, University of British Columbia Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, G3512 V357 1860 D4.

A.3. VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN HOMES

The Robert Street heritage conservation area includes three Victorian and Edwardian era houses on Robert Street and one on Seaforth Street. They were constructed for upper class families between 1888 and 1911. Three are associated with the Muirhead family and the Muirhead and Mann Company, which made architectural components (223 and 230 Robert Street and 614 Seaforth Street). 223 and 230 Robert Street have outstanding architectural value and were designed by provincially renowned architects Thomas Hooper and Charles Elwood Watkins.

Development of Robert Street began with James Muirhead Sr.'s purchase of lots 3, 8, 12, 17, 20 and 23 of Robert Russell's subdivision, comprising almost the entire east half of Robert Street. In 1883, James built an Italianate style house at the southeast corner of Robert Street and Esquimalt Road for his wife Rebecca and their four children. They planted gardens and Tomkins King Apple Trees on their lands to the south. King Apple Trees are rare in Victoria. Muirhead Sr.'s son, James Muirhead Jr. constructed his own house on Robert Street in 1903 on the most southerly of the six lots the family owned.³

James Muirhead Sr. is an historically significant figure for his entrepreneurial contributions to the City's early construction industry. Born in Scotland, he immigrated to Victoria in 1862 from Peru after travelling across the Americas. In 1870, he partnered with fellow Scottish immigrant, James Mann, forming the Muirhead and Mann company. They constructed a lumber mill called the Victoria Planing Mills, in Victoria Harbour near the foot of Pembroke Street.



527 Esquimalt Road, 1897, Muirhead family standing in front of house, L to R: Mrs. Rebecca (nee Fleming), James Sr., Mary A., James McL., John T. and Bertha. City of Victoria Archives Item M09856.

Apart from 223 Robert Street, two other houses are connected to the Muirhead and Mann Company and the Victoria Planing Mills. Duncan McBeath, a foreman at the Victoria Planing Mills, commissioned the one-storey Queen Anne-style cottage at 230 Robert Street in 1899. In 1911, McBeath and his wife commissioned 614 Seaforth Street from architect Hoult Horton. This 1.5-storey house was built in the Colonial Bungalow style and features an expansive wrap-around verandah. The final Victorian and Edwardian era house on Robert Street is 242 Robert Street, a Queen Anne style house built by William Ernest Losee, who purchased his lot directly from Robert Russell. Like the Muirheads, William Losee was involved in the building trades, having founded a sawmill in Shawnigan Lake in 1899. The house at 242 Robert Street was originally located at 621 Seaforth Street and was moved in 1978 to free up land for an apartment building.



Victoria Planing Mills, BC Archives Item C09035.

The Muirheads were just one of many prominent families who moved to Victoria West during the 1880s and 1890s. The Dunsmuir (coal and E&N Railway), Gray (Albion Iron Works), Troup (shipping), Barnard (B.C. Coast Steamship Company), Brackman (Brackman-Kerr Milling Co) and Fairall (brewers) families all lived in Victoria West.



223 Robert Street, ca. 1904. Architect: Thomas Hooper. Photographer: Richard Hamilton Muirhead, d. 1979. City of Victoria Archives Item C09027.



614 Seaforth Street, c. 1911, Architect: Hoult Horton.



230 Robert Street, c. 1899-1900, Architect: Thomas Hooper.



242 Robert Street "Huntingdon Cottage", c. 1888-1889, Builder: William Ernest Losee. The house was relocated from 621 Seaforth Street in 1978.

A.4. MINIMAL TRADITIONAL HOMES

The transition away from large properties and landholdings began in the 1900s and may have several causes. According to the Victoria Heritage Foundation, new income taxes introduced during the First World War made large estates far more expensive to maintain. Victoria West's picturesque character was transformed through industrialization, beginning in the 1880s, when sealing, whaling and lumber operations were established on the Songhees Reserve. The process continued with the construction of the Silver Spring Brewery in 1895, Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway in 1888, Excelsior Biscuit Bakery in 1901, Fairall Bottling Works in 1901 as well as the Sidney Roofing and Paper Company, and Union Oil facilities. In 1913, the E&N roundhouse and carshop facilities were constructed four blocks east of Robert Street.⁴ A third factor in Victoria West's evolution was economic stagnation between the end of the First and Second World Wars.

James Muirhead Jr. had inherited his father's land holdings on Robert Street, but the cost of maintaining the holdings became unsustainable in the 1930s. By 1935, City tax records show that taxes on lots 12, 17 and 20 (233–311 Robert Street) were in arrears. The City of Victoria took possession of the lots by 1936.⁵ The lots were divided into halves measuring 51' x 180' and new owners purchased them for between \$495–\$510.

There are eight homes on Robert Street built between 1939 and 1945, and two others constructed in 1955. The houses built during the Second World War were constructed for working class households. Multiple owners worked in the local transportation industry. Sam Waddington (224 Robert Street) and Frederick Richmond (311 Robert Street) both worked for the E&N Railway. Edward Beaney (241 Robert Street) worked for the B.C. Electric Railway Company. Erwood Honeybourne (301 Robert Street) worked as a labourer at the HMC dockyard. Other owners include George Goy (206 Robert Street) and Charles Fea (233 Robert Street), who was a clerk for the Liquor Control Board. Construction values for these homes averaged \$3,175 (\$55,928 adjusted for inflation).

Unlike the Victorian and Edwardian homes, owners of Minimal Traditional homes worked with building contractors on their designs and did not retain the services of professional architects.

The houses built during the Second World War have detailing consistent with the Minimal Traditional Style. This was an economical, simplified architectural style that represented a transition between the elaborate historical revival styles of the 1920s and 1930s and modern postwar housing. The economic hardships of the Great Depression and a growing appetite for modern architectural styles like art deco, art moderne and the international style contributed to the simplicity of the Minimal Traditional style.⁶

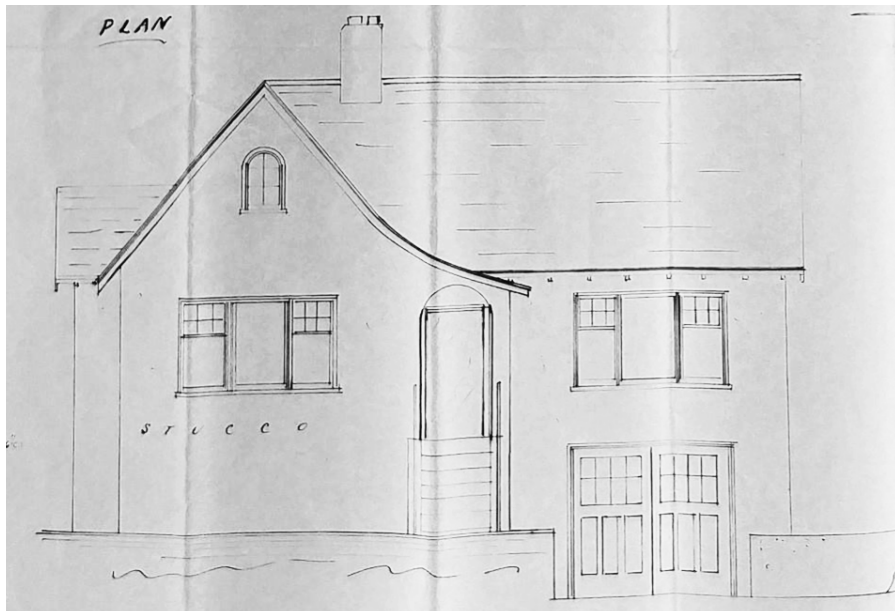


In 1898, Victoria West was mostly natural areas, however this picturesque setting was heavily altered by industrial development starting in the 1880s.

Johnson Street Bridge and Victoria waterfront (ca. 1898) From "Pictures of Victoria and Vicinity", [ca. 1900] - L0507. City of Victoria Archives Item M06589.

Minimal Traditional homes resemble streamlined versions of styles like the English cottage, Tudor revival or Spanish revival. 206, 224, 233, 241 and 255 Robert Street all display features that reference the English cottage style popular in the 1920s. With superfluous detailing stripped away, the smaller size, compact square floor plans and lower price point of these homes allowed some families to purchase a detached house for the first time. Home decoration magazines promoted minimalism over the outgoing “feather-duster” era as a means to more efficient housekeeping.⁷

The minimal traditional houses on Robert Street are all 1–1.5-storey, two-bedroom houses. Most feature below-grade garages, originally with carriage-style wooden garage doors, a nostalgic reference to horse-drawn carriages. They have concrete foundations, 2x4 wood framed upper storeys and stucco exterior cladding. The interior rooms are organized on a square floor plan, with a living room to one side of the main entry and a bedroom on the other. A central fireplace and chimney face the living room. The square floor plan was the most space-efficient design with the least amount of lineal feet to construct and may explain the choice to incorporate garages into the basement level.

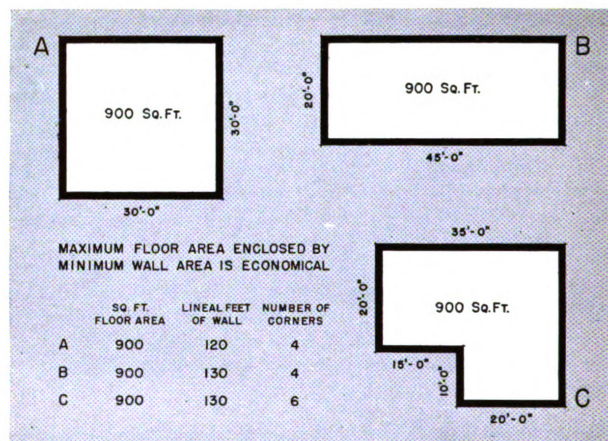


224 Robert Street, Original Drawing by James Fairall, June 15, 1940.



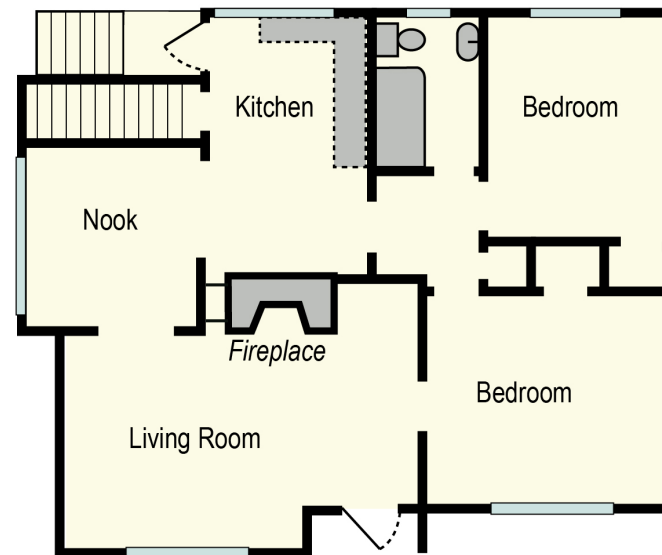
224 Robert Street in 2020. Some details were altered during construction and the entrance and windows do not match the plans.

Houses on Robert Street were likely financed under the federal *National Housing Act* of 1938, the successor to the *Dominion Housing Act* in 1935. The *Dominion Housing Act* (DHA) was the first national housing legislation in the nation's history. It was championed by Prime Minister R. B. Bennett during the Great Depression as part of a Canadian New Deal, inspired by President Roosevelt's New Deal in the United States. The DHA improved housing affordability by partnering the federal government and private mortgage lenders to improve mortgage terms. A DHA joint mortgage increased the maximum loan amount above the statutory limit of 60 per cent to 80 per cent of the total property cost. Interest rates were limited to five per cent, which was lower than a conventional mortgage of the time. The DHA also introduced long term, 20-year amortization periods, and monthly payments, at a time when 3–5 year terms and quarterly or bi-annual payments were typical. These measures combined to make home ownership more affordable and competitive with renting.⁸



THE THREE HOUSES ABOVE have the same floor area. House B would be more costly to build than house A due to its additional ten lineal feet of wall. If this were a one-story and basement house, it would have about 165 more square feet of foundation and exterior wall area than house A. The cost of house C, which has the same exterior wall area as house B, would be increased by the added cost of two exterior corners, and would cost much more than house A.

From: *Principles of Planning Small Houses*. Washington, D.C. National Housing Agency, [1946.]



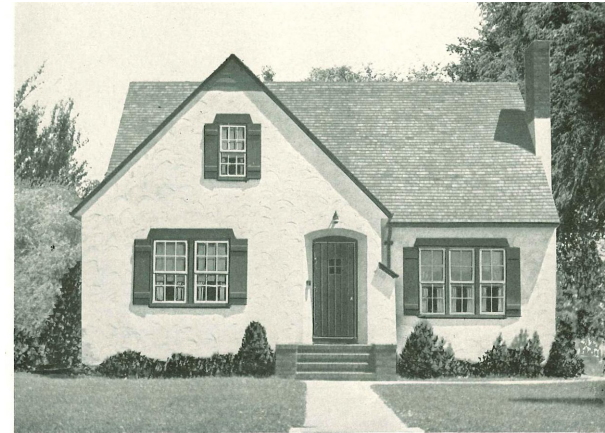
206 Robert Street – Compact, square floor plan typical of a Minimal Traditional house with a middle entrance flanked by a living room and bedroom. The chimney is centred in the floor plan.



206 Robert Street, c. 1945, Constructed by A. Petek for Mr. George Goy. Rolled eaves and bricks embedded in plaster are references to the English Cottage Style.



233 Robert Street, c. 1939, Constructed by E.H. Pope for Charles Fea, who worked as a clerk at the Liquor Control Board.



Seven Rooms and Alcove

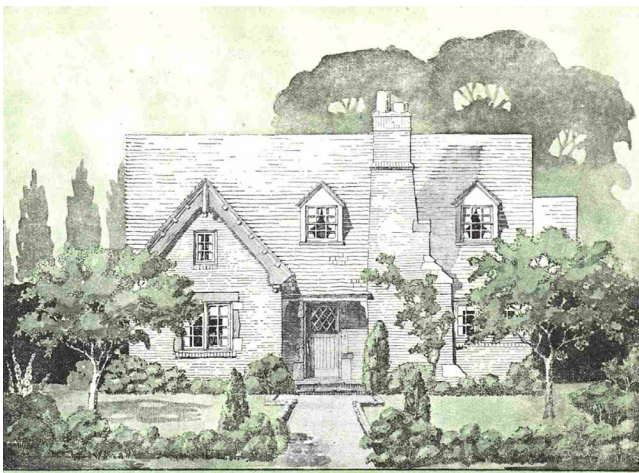
22,150 Cubic Feet

The Newbury

ONE of the finest of its kind, here is presented a handsome stucco bungalow of the English type. There is a remarkable amount of space in the house. If so wished, the upstairs may be

left unfinished until later, although the plans include two large bedrooms, lavatory and an alcove suitable as a nursery or dressing room. A home of this style meets wide approval, and should be excellent for resale.

24'0"



Finley & Melbourn, Architects

The small house can be made as beautiful and satisfying and lasting as the great house if as much thought is given to the planning of it

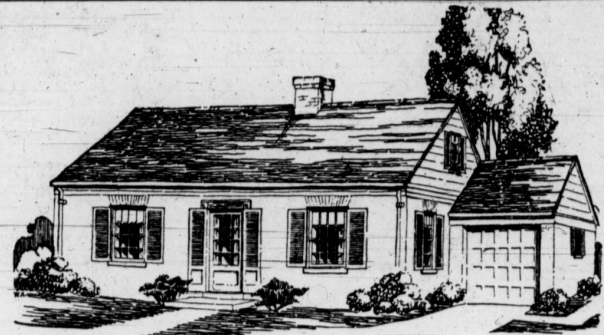
From: "Beauty and Convenience Built-In", *Better Homes and Gardens*, September 1928. An example of the more elaborate English cottage revival style of the 1920's.



255 Robert Street, c. 1940, Constructed by N.A. Thomas for Howard Horner, who was a trainman for the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railroad.

Applicants for a Dominion Housing Act mortgage needed 20 per cent of the total project value in cash or land, then a lender would provide a loan equal to 80 per cent of the total value of a new detached house. The maximum loan amount was \$4,000 (for a \$5,000 project). The National Housing Act improved on these terms further, lowering the equity requirement from 20 per cent to 10 per cent, provided the house cost no more than \$2,500. The Daily Colonist ran multiple articles on the effects of the legislation during the late 1930s, citing it as the dominant factor fueling construction of 6,000 new single family homes throughout B.C. in 1938.⁹ In May of 1939, the Daily Colonist reported that the City of Victoria Building Department had issued the largest number of building permits for detached dwellings in any four month period since 1931.¹⁰

A Really Picturesque Colonial Cottage



COULD one hope to find a more perfect example of a small Colonial cottage than this. No frills or furbelows to grow old and become uninteresting, just honest-to-goodness house from start to finish, with only standard materials of stock sizes and shapes used to accomplish the effect, with a minimum cost.

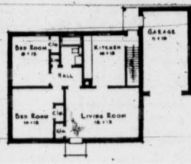
The exterior walls may be of most any of the following materials and still be "architecturally correct": Brick, plain struck joints or white-washed, stucco, creek or random ashlar limestone or a combination of brick and stone trim, using clapboards to finish out the gables as illustrated.

The roof should be of weather-beaten effect such as weathered grey or brown, laid in none too mechanical fashion, painting the sash a putty color and staining the outside woodwork a very weathered grey-green or walnut brown.

The sketch of the floor plan reveals the unusual arrangement which is rather distinctive and at the same time not at all expensive to build. All walls are of sand-finish plaster, floors of wide plank, plaster jambs at all windows, beams in the living-room ceiling and a very attractive and simple old Colonial fireplace.

All the interior woodwork is too new, and rust-colored hand-wrought hardware is used on the front door for the same reason.

A few "broken lights" are used in the sash at certain points in order to relieve the feeling that the house is too new, and rust-colored hand-wrought hardware is used on the front door for the same reason.



Article from Sunday, April 21, 1940 with plans for an affordable cottage-style house and attached garage.

BUILD THE HOME YOU HAVE DREAMED OF NOW!

There is nothing to compare with the thrill of home ownership . . . it is the long looked for goal of every family. Money paid out in rent is lost . . . a mere tax on the passing years. Money paid out in home ownership is an investment in a valuable asset with value received for the outlay.



YOU PAY OUT OF INCOME

With a

DOMINION HOUSING LOAN

Now there is no need to wait for years while the necessary capital is amassed. For less than 20% of the completed cost you may build your own house under the Dominion Housing Act. Repayment and interest charges are carried at a cost that is as little or less than renting, and you have the satisfaction of watching your equity grow, month by month.

EXAMPLE!

Brown has a lot worth \$800 and wishes to build a house for . . .	\$2700
Giving him a total property value of . . .	\$3000
The Dominion Housing Loan provides 80% of this . . .	\$2400
Brown puts up \$600 (less the value of the lot), i.e. cash . . .	\$300
The total monthly charges he must meet for interest and retirement of the loan is only . . .	\$15.69
Over a Period of Twenty Years	

Simple . . . Convenient . . . Planned to Meet Your Needs

You choose the type of home you wish, in a location that suits you. You only put up a small cash payment, plus the value of the lot. The balance is spread over a period of twenty years with no finance charges or extras. Payments are arranged like rent, on a monthly basis, with the option of repayment in full at any time you wish. In every way the Dominion Housing Act is designed to aid the man of moderate income, giving him the opportunity to enjoy the advantages of home ownership now.

These Firms Endorse the Dominion Housing Act and Are Ready to Serve You

HOME BUILDERS		
PARFITT BROS., LTD. Contractors and Builders—No Job Too Small or "Too Large" 1405 Douglas Street Phone E 2221	V. L. LEIGH "Own a 'Leigh-Built Home'" Phone E 7422 440 Port Street	MCCULLOCH & CO. Builders 704 Yates Street Phone E 9343
BUILDERS' SUPPLIES AND SERVICE		
B.C. ELECTRIC GAS DEPARTMENT Gas Heating and Air-Conditioning Plants — Domestic Hot Water — Storage Systems — Modernistic Gas Appliances	B.C. CEMENT COMPANY, LTD. Manufacturers Portland Cement 805 Government Street	
EVANS, COLEMAN & JOHNSON BROS., LTD. Cement, Gypsum, Plaster, Tile Work, Insulation 1807 Store Street Phone E 8212	LEMON, GONNASON COMPANY, LTD. Everything in Woodwork 2124 Government Street Phone E 7141	
C. J. McDOWELL A Complete Plumbing and Heating Service 1000 Douglas Street Phone E 4138		

The minimal traditional houses of Robert Street are symbols of the nation's first federal housing strategy. This strategy prioritized new construction, suburban development and single-family home ownership over alternatives and established a template for middle class housing of the postwar period.

Threshold of Happiness



A Home of Their Own
 WITHIN THE REACH
 OF THE NEWLY-WEDS
 THROUGH THE
National Housing Act

Now the young couple can start married life in their own home, built to their own requirements to their own plans. All they need is 20% of the completed value, in the form of a building site, cash or both. The balance may be paid from income on a monthly basis over a twenty-year period. They get a new home, a home of their own, for monthly payments that are less than rent.

LOANS OF \$2,500 AND LESS
 May Be Secured With Only 10% Down in Cash or Building Lot

WE ARE AUTHORIZED AGENTS

Pemberton & Son, Ltd.
 PHONE G 8124 625 FORT STREET

THE DAILY COLONIST, VICTORIA, B.C., SUNDAY, APRIL 21, 1940 19

Housing Act Stimulates Building Here

W.M. O'NEIL CO. (VICTORIA) LTD.

TILE

FOR
 FIREPLACES
 SINKS, FLOORS AND WALLS

High-Grade Building Materials

WM. N. O'NEIL CO. (VICTORIA) LTD.
 551 YATES STREET

EVANS, COLEMAN & JOHNSON BROS. LIMITED

BUILDERS' SUPPLIES

1807 Store Street Phones: E 8514 - E 8212

Weather Strips

For Draughty Windows and Doors - Stop Rattles Save Fuel

Also ROLSCREENS (the Modern Fly Screen) and VENETIAN BLINDS

B. T. LEIGH E 9685
 736 NEWPORT AVENUE

Character Found in Low Cost Home



THIS house is especially designed for a fifty-foot lot and the "best foot" is placed forward, using the main entrance door and front window as points of interest, no additional money being spent to achieve the result. Its design is such a nature that any accepted material, such as brick, frame, or stucco may be used for the walls and anything from asphalt shingles to slate or tile may be used on the roof. Solid steel casement sash, warm air heat, tile bath, etc., are some of the items included in the specifications.



Stained bakelite shutters are used on the front windows. Standard-size materials of stock design have

been used throughout in an endeavor to keep the cost as low as possible. This, of course, includes joists, rafters, doors, windows and even the design of the baseboard. The plan shows that sufficient furniture space is allowed in each room. Nothing has been left out that could possibly add more to its attractiveness or cheapen the cost of its construction without considerably affecting either its appearance, its comfort or future upkeep cost. Ample space for a driveway would be left on a fifty-foot lot.

**Rules to Follow
 In Applying for
 Housing Act Loan**

**CONSIDER EACH
 SEPARATE ROOM**

Rooms Should Receive Consideration as Separate Unit

Everywhere Homes Are Rising Under the NATIONAL HOUSING ACT

The plan that makes the long wait for capital unnecessary.

MONTHLY PAYMENTS THAT ARE LESS THAN RENT

LET US SHOW YOU HOW YOU CAN BUILD NOW

\$6.54 PER THOUSAND
 Borrowed, paid monthly, retires interest and principal on a twenty-year basis.

All you need is 20% of the completed value in the form of a building lot, cash or both. You choose your own plans and builder, and with the minimum of red tape and delay construction is started on a home of your own.

We Are Authorized Agents

P. R. BROWN & SONS, LTD.
 1112 BROAD STREET PHONE G 7171

Above: Sunday, April 21, 1940 edition of the Daily Colonist. This 2-bedroom house has a similar floor plan to many houses on Robert Street

Left: A mortgage broker advertises National Housing Act housing loans.

Appendix B: Lewis Street History

B.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 *sxʷenxʷəŋ təŋəxʷ*, (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.



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



View S.E. across the harbour towards the James Bay Bridge from the Songhees Reserve, c. 1865. Ainslie Helmcken. City of Victoria Archives Item M06525.



"A Woman Weaving a Blanket", Paul Kane, oil on canvas, Southeastern Vancouver Island, B.C., 1849-1856, 18"x29", Gift of Sir Edmund Osler.

B.2. HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY FARM TO GRAND ESTATES

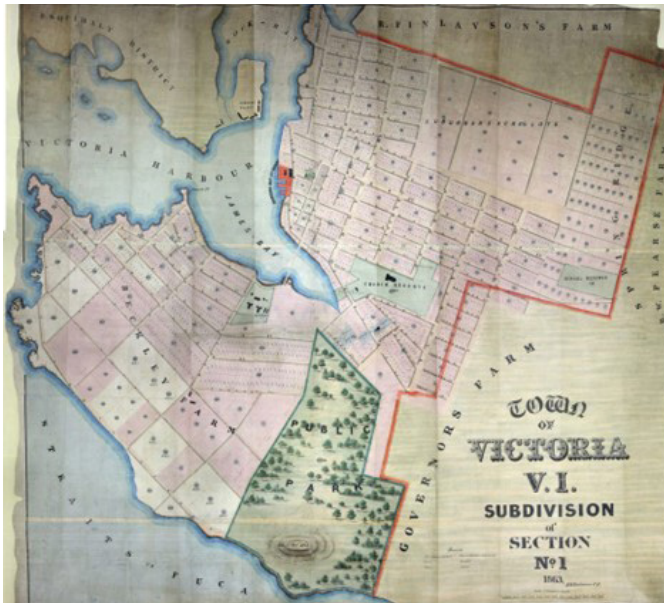
In 1843 the Hudson's Bay Company established Beckley Farm on the James Bay Peninsula as part of a network of farms that provided food and goods to Fort Victoria. As Victoria transitioned from fort to gold rush town to capital city, these farms were subdivided into grand estates. Lewis Street is located 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.



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



Captain Herbert George Lewis and Mrs. Mary Lewis (nee Langford). City of Victoria Archives Item M08890.



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

B.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.



Lewis Street.



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.



35 Lewis Street, built 1907.



39 Lewis Street, built 1908.



50 Lewis Street, built 1912.

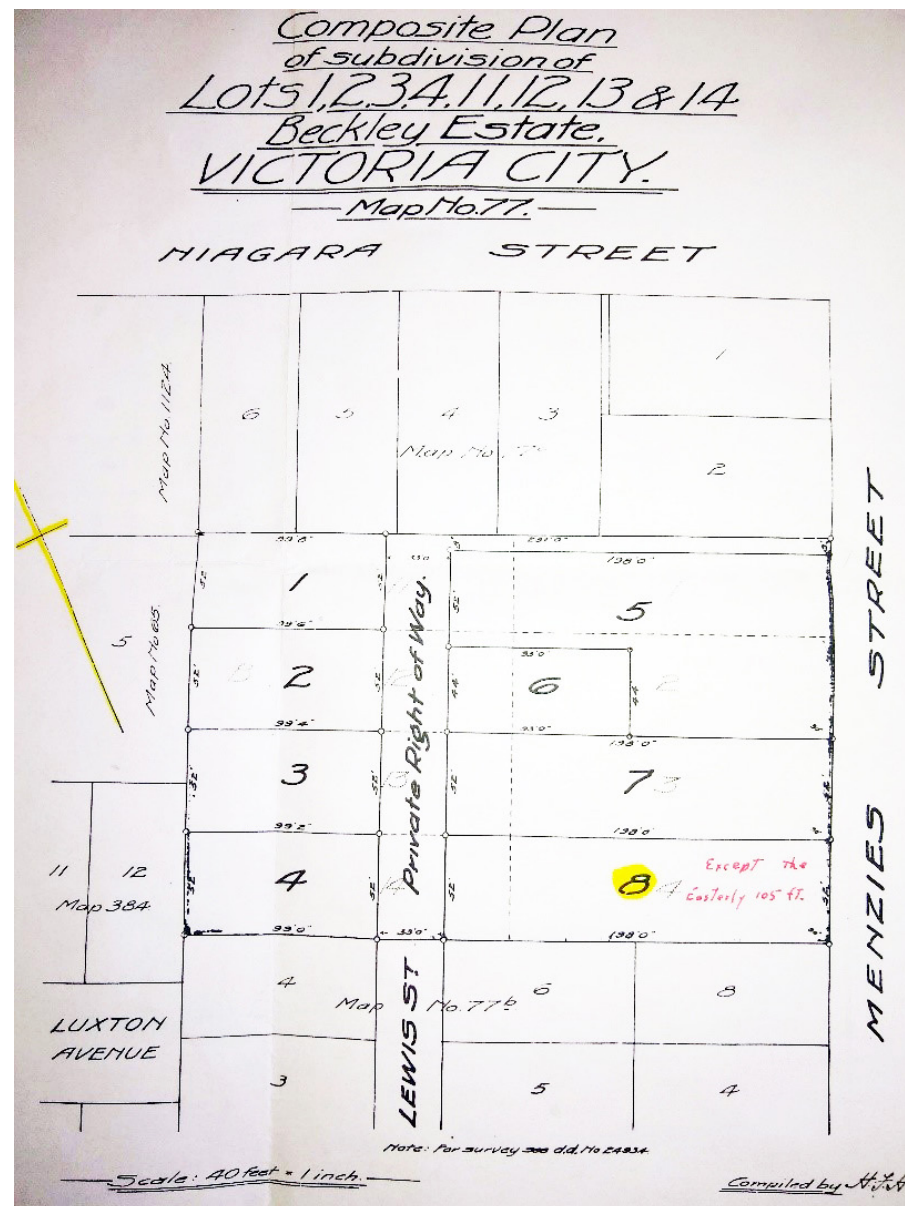


53 Lewis Street, built 1929.

B.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.

Endnotes

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10. Many Homes Built Through Dominion Government Loan. (1938, Sunday, April 10). *The Daily Colonist*. Page 3. Appendix A: Robert Street History



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