VICTORIA HERITAGE FOUNDATION

The City of Victoria has a fine record in the field of heritage conservation in Canada. For over 50 years, Victoria has demonstrated leadership in furthering the preservation of our heritage resources. Since 1978, the City of Victoria has been offering funding assistance to owners of heritage-designated houses. Since 1983, the Victoria Heritage Foundation (VHF) has administered this grants program. Grants are awarded for structural work and seismic upgrading, and rehabilitation and maintenance of exteriors and designated interiors, outbuildings, walls and fences. There are now over 370 designated houses, the newest being built in 1959. 323 have received grants. 33 owners have won Hallmark Society Awards. In 1989, the City established Victoria Civic Heritage Trust to extend its successful program of grants to include commercial, institutional, industrial & apartment buildings.

If you own or plan to purchase an old house in the City & would like to consider designating the house, contact the City of Victoria.

For more information about the residential funding program, contact
Victoria Heritage Foundation
91 Centennial Square, Victoria, BC V8W 1P6
phone: 250.383.4515
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www.victoriacivicheritage.ca

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JAMES BAY
HERITAGE WALKING TOUR
Nº 1

EMILY CARR WALK

James Bay is Victoria’s oldest neighbourhood. This self-guided walking tour briefly describes some of its history and selected buildings along a route that begins and ends at the corner of Government and Superior Streets, just south of the Inner Harbour. The walk includes many of the streets where writer and artist Emily Carr lived and members of the Carr family owned several homes. The route covers approximately 3.2 km (2 miles), taking about 2 hours to complete. You may want to take a break in James Bay Village or have a picnic in Beacon Hill Park or on the Dallas Road cliffs where Emily liked to sketch.

ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

Hillside-Quadra & Neighbourhood Heritage Walking Tour brochures are available from Victoria City Hall, the Tourist Info Centre on the Inner Harbour or VHF.

Detailed architectural information on James Bay buildings listed on the City of Victoria’s Heritage Register, with a great deal of social history & many photographs, old & new, can be found in Victoria Heritage Foundation’s publication
This Old House, Victoria’s Heritage Neighbourhoods, Volume 2: James Bay

All four volumes of This Old House are now available at Victoria City Hall & local independent bookstores.

TYPICAL JAMES BAY HOUSING STYLES

Italianate (1860-1900)
Cubical, symmetrical façade with low-pitched roof
Typical features: • small front porch
• overhanging eaves with decorative brackets
• angled & box bay windows often 1-storey
• tall, narrow double-hung windows
• no beltcourse

Queen Anne (1880-1910)
Asymmetrical façade with steeply pitched roof
Typical features: • variety of surface treatments
• turrets, finials, decorated cornices and bargeboards
• prominent front porch with spindlework
• cutaway angled windows
• double-hung windows

Edwardian Foursquare (1900-20)
Low-pitched hip roofed 2-storey box
Typical features: • a room on each level
• wide eaves • prominent front porch
• horizontal features such as belt course & contrasting cladding at different levels

Edwardian Vernacular Arts & Crafts (1904-14)
A common builder’s style in Victoria.
1½-stories, steeply-pitched roof, belt course asymmetrical main floor, symmetrical upper,
Typical features• front gabled • side dormers
• inset corner porch balanced by bay window
• contrasting cladding at different levels

Colonial Bungalow (1905-1925)
Economical 1-storey, hip roofed (often belled) bungalow
Typical features: • at least 1 dormer
• wide projecting eaves with modillions (flat brackets)
• Classical columns or posts with simplified capitals
• inset verandah

British Arts & Crafts (1905-30)
Vernacular building types from British regions/periods.
Typical features: • asymmetrical design
• Tudor references such as stucco with half-timbering
• Informal, functional plan
• prominent chimney

Victoria Heritage Foundation (VHF)
in partnership with the City of Victoria, has produced
Neighbourhood Heritage Walking Tour brochures for parts of the James Bay, North Park, Fernwood, Hillside-Quadra & Fairfield neighbourhoods.
These are available from Victoria City Hall, the Tourist Info Centre on the Inner Harbour or VHF.

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About James Bay
The fertile flat peninsula across the harbour from Fort Victoria is the neighbourhood we now know as James Bay. When the Europeans arrived, seasonal camps belonging to the ancestors of the Songhees First Nation dotted the cliffs, and a burial ground dominated Laurel Pt. Sir James Douglas had established the Fort in 1843, and set aside much of the peninsula for Beecroft Farm, to supply Hudson’s Bay Company personnel. (The home farm stood near the intersection of Mensies & Simcoe.) Douglas built himself a fine home in 1852 on the north shore, facing the fort (now site of the Royal BC Museum). Later, Queen Victoria appointed Douglas as Governor of Vancouver Island, then of British Columbia. Douglas Street and the original James Bay were named for him. His son-in-law, Dr. J.S. Helmcken, the colony’s first doctor, built next door the same year, and his home, Arbutus Lodge, survives on its original site, beside the museum, the oldest surviving building in the city.

After construction of the first legislative buildings for the Colony of Vancouver Island in 1851-52, and the first James Bay Bridge in 1869 (now the Causeway), the surrounding area became desirable residential property for Victoria’s social and political elite, who built substantial homes nearby. Woodlands, built in 1865, (now Government) is the oldest surviving residence still in use in James Bay, but many other villas have succumbed to development. Several of the Carr family homes have survived.

During the 1880s and ‘90s, James Bay’s west end became an important industrial area, with a flour mill, grain elevator, shipyard, furniture factory, biscuit factory, woolen mill and fish-processing plant. This prompted further modest residential construction. The increased population led to building the substantial South Park School in 1894 and the Beacon Hill School (now residences) in 1914. The popularity of the area was cemented by the opening of the vast new Legislative in 1898 and the reclamation of the original James Bay for the Empress Hotel in 1910. The “Outer Wharves” at the tip of the peninsula (now cruise-ship docks) and completion of the huge Ogden Point Breakwater (1917), to encourage shipping, also spurred home-building. Grand homes, like 218 Douglas St, continued to be built until the First World War. Whole streets of modest workers’ cottages were also added during World War II, to accommodate busy shipyards. Redevelopment and modernization in the 1950s-70s destroyed many historic structures.

Community activism in the 1970s persuaded municipal government to restrict the tide of highrises and to preserve some of James Bay’s heritage buildings. But the current government to restrict the tide of highrises and to preserve some of James Bay’s heritage buildings. But the current building boom is once again taking its toll on James Bay’s beautiful old homes and streetscapes.

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Cross over Government St, turn left on Toronto St
589 Toronto St built 1903 to north on Government, moved 1910, then 1927 to here. Edwardian Classical Revival Q&A, pediment entrance, Corinthian columns, tower balanced by a storey bay.
583-85 Q&A cottage, steep-rhipped roof with front & side gables over large bay windows with outcavus & brackets, fishscale shingles, scrollawn cutouts in gable bargeboards.
585-87 Colonial Bungalow, square front windows, shed roof, dormer.
589-95 Edwardian Foursquare, bellcast roof, original garage.
596-98 Colonial Bungalow of concrete block & steel, concrete block base & steps, slate roof, segmental arches over windows, sidelights & transom around front door; newer garage.
594-50 Colonial Bungalow; its mate 532 demolished 2007.

Five Corners intersection, centre of historic & present-day James Bay village.

- turn left on Simcoe St

- turn left on St Marys St corner
141-143 145-147 159 Menzies arch. Thomas Hooper, built for Windsor Grocery; round corner tower, angled oriels.

Continue on Simcoe St
507-11 Simcoe St 1910 built as private school, Mansard roof; window stub over original shed roof. 1923 added. 1955 then 1980s roof addition on west side.

- look right on Clarence St and house on right
461-11 1895-96 Queen Anne, arch. Hugh MacLure. 1927 Owner Wm Wallace Gibson built, in back yard, first Canadian-built airplane to fly in Western Canada: a 5-ton 2-place open cockpit biplane.

Continue on Simcoe St, turn right on South Turner St
161 South Turner St 1911 Edwardian Foursquare, designer/owner for Elizabeth & George Sangster.
155 151 British A&C Bungalow variation, heavyhipped roof; also for McCrimmon for Sangster.

- turn left on Marion Av
614 Marion 1893 arch. JCM Keith, unknown house.

- turn right on St Andrews St
231 231 1911 Edwardian Foursquare, Edwardian flared roof, & dormers. The original house was built 1909 for the Carr sisters: Emily Carr (on corner)

Continue on Marion Av, turn right on A&C houses of various types in a row:
609-611 A&C houses of various types in a row:
611-613 1911 Edwardian Foursquare, corner house.
613-615 A&C, many alterations.
615-617 1911 Edwardian Foursquare, Queen Anne, 2-storey ladies' residence, with mansard roof.

- turn left on Marion Av
614 Marion 1893 arch. JCM Keith, unknown house.

- turn right on St Andrews St
231 231 1911 Edwardian Foursquare, Edwardian flared roof, & dormers. The original house was built 1909 for the Carr sisters: Emily Carr (on corner)