City of Port Alberni

Community Heritage Register

October, 2006

Prepared by
The Alberni Valley Museum and Heritage Commission

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Introduction

The Alberni Valley Community Heritage Register (CHR) is an official list of historic places, specific to the community, which have been identified as having heritage value or heritage character. Among other things, a CHR enables the local government and community to understand and identify the significance of its historic places, to monitor heritage properties for proposed changes, and to integrate heritage conservation activities into other local government land use planning processes.

The Community Heritage Register ensures the inclusion of a community's historic places on the British Columbia Register of Historic Places (BCRHP), the official provincial listing of historic places that have been formally recognized for their heritage value by the provincial or local governments. Listings on the BCRHP may also be included on the Canadian Register of Historic Places (CRHP), a register of registers which is becoming the most important Internet-based heritage tool for planners, policymakers, developers, industry, community organizations, teachers and students across Canada.

This Community Heritage Register follows the documentation standards established for the British Columbia Register of Historic Places. Each record for each historic place listed includes detailed information regarding location, formal recognition and protection, historic and current functions, as well as a Statement of Significance. The Statement of Significance outlines *what* comprises the historic place in a brief description, *why* a historic place possesses heritage value, and *how* those values are manifested in a list of character-defining elements. The following register of historic places in the Alberni Valley meets the requirements of section 954 of the Local Government Act, providing the local government with an up-to-date and effective tool to guide their planning and development of the City's heritage resources.

3061 8ᵗʰ Avenue
Rollin Art Centre and Garden
Other Names Fred and Ellen Rollin's House

Figure 1: Southwest view

Figure 2: 1915

Figure 3: North view

Statement of Significance

Description of Historic Place
The Rollin Art Centre and Gardens occupies a prominent site on 4 city lots on the corner of 8ᵗʰ Ave. and Argyle St. Originally built as a home for Fred & Ellen Rollin in 1914, the Rollin Art Centre is a simple, wooden exterior, two story structure with a hip roof and a second story balcony on the front side of the building.

Heritage Value

The heritage value of the Rollin Art Centre lies both in its historical associations, providing links to memories of one of the early settler families and life in Port Alberni in the early part of the 20th century, and its later role as a community arts centre and public garden.

The beautiful gardens which surround the building today provide a living legacy to the memory of Fred Rollins who was an ardent gardener, outdoorsman and naturalist. As the city of Port Alberni grew up around him, Fred Rollin became known for his beautiful garden with its many unusual species of trees, shrubs and spring bulbs.

The present use of the building as a community arts centre honors the memory and continues in the spirit of Ellen Rollin, who was one of only two music teachers in the Valley for many years. It also is a testament to the dedicated volunteers whose vision and hard work were responsible for the creation of the Rollin Art Centre in 1977.

The Rollin Art Centre and Gardens provide a visual link to memories of life in Port Alberni in the early part of the 20th century and to the role that the Rollin family played in that history.

The Rollin Art Centre has primary social significance to the Alberni Valley as the first permanent "home of the arts" in the Alberni Valley and as one of the first arts council operated art centres in the province. From its beginnings as an arts centre in 1977 to the present day, the Rollin Art Centre is a community symbol of the vision, commitment, perseverance and unflagging efforts of dedicated volunteers who believed and continue to believe in the importance of a strong presence of the arts in the Alberni Valley.

Character-Defining Elements
The character defining elements of the Rollin Art Centre and Garden include:
- The beautiful, well maintained public gardens
- Decorative garden structures: two garden fountains, balustrade and granite sculpture
- Situation of the building on its original site
- Exterior building features including its modest, simple homelike appearance, wood frame, wood shingles and hip roof
- Garden gazebo used for special events, including musical performances and weddings
- Present use of the place as a public gallery and public garden

Formal Recognition

Recognition Type   Heritage Registration
Recognition Enactment
Recognition Date

Location

Province/Territory	British Columbia
Community	Port Alberni
Location Description	
Cadastral Identifier	P.I.D. 009-248-846

Historical Information

Construction Date(s)

From	circa 1914	
To	1914	

Significant Date(s)	1914 – 1976	residence of Fred and Ellen Rollin
	1977	Community Arts Council of the Alberni Valley signs an agreement with the City of Port Alberni to lease the Rollin House and two adjacent lots with the goal of creating a community arts centre.
Theme – Category and Type		Building Social and Community Life – Community Organizations
		Expressing Intellectual and Cultural Life – Learning and the Arts
Function – Category and Type		Single Dwelling – Historic
		Park – Current
		Recreation Centre - Current
Associated Architect/ Builder		
Architect		
Builder		

Additional Information

Contributing Resources	1 building
	1 landscape
Related Listing(s)	
Location of Supporting Documentation	
	Alberni Valley Museum and Archives
Cross-Reference to Collection	
Links	http://www.alberni.net/communityarts/
Category of Property	public
Federal/Provincial/Territorial Identifier	

4850 Argyle Street
Port Alberni City Hall
Other Names City Hall

Statement of Significance

Description of Historic Place
Port Alberni City Hall is a rectangular wood, steel and glass building built in the International style of the 1950's.   It lies at the edge of the commercial district now known as South Port, facing Argyle Street, the main East-West thoroughfare, and is surrounded by attractive landscaped gardens.

Heritage Value
Port Alberni City Hall was officially opened on May 20th, 1959, representing, along with the Federal Building opposite, a new civic core at the height of the city's economic boom, which reached a peak in 1958. After the amalgamation of the twin cities of Alberni and Port Alberni in 1967 the building became the seat of the combined municipality and one of the symbols of the newly integrated community.

The building maintains continuity with the Alberni Valley's past.   It stands adjacent to the site of the previous municipal hall constructed in 1928, which was demolished when the new City Hall was built.

In keeping with the City Hall's role as a monument to local government at pride, the landscaped lawns and gardens around the building have been chosen to display items of civic heritage value: items as various as the city's war memorial, a section of original old growth log, a shelter made from timbers from the first sawmill in the Alberni Valley, and a lilac bush propagated from an original plant owned by A. Waterhouse one of the founders of the city.

The building is architecturally important as a fine example of 1950's international style and is one of a pair architecturally designed to form the City's civic core. Designed by architects Wade, Stockdill, and Armour of Victoria, the modern aesthetic of this building reflects establishment and growth of Port Alberni as a vital and permanent city; a centre for natural-resource based commercial endeavours and strong community values.

Character-Defining Elements

The character-defining elements of the Port Alberni City Hall include:
- its links with Port Alberni's past development and boom times
- its International Style architectural aesthetic,
- its horizontal articulation, composed of clear glazed surfaces, horizontal bands of light blue porcelain-enameled spandrel panels and plain aluminum window mullions
- its attractive landscaped setting and its suitability as a display place for symbols of civic heritage, such as the war memorial.
- the presence of a lilac bush descended from an original plant owned by A. Waterhouse.
- its prominent location on the edge of the South Port commercial area
- its compatibility of design with the Federal Building opposite (a recognized Federal Heritage Building: #9320)

Formal Recognition

Recognition Type   Heritage Registration
Recognition Enactment
Recognition Date

Location

Province/Territory   British Columbia
Community   Port Alberni
Location Description   South Port
Cadastral Identifier   P.I.D. 004-961-714

Historical Information

Construction Date(s)
          From   1959
          To   1959
Significant Date(s)
Theme – Category and Type   Governing Canada – Government and Institutions
Function – Category and Type   Town or City Hall – Historic
                                        Town or City Hall - Current
Associated Architect/ Builder
          Architect/Designer   Wade, Stockdill, and Armour
          Builder

Additional Information

Contributing Resources   1 building
                                1 landscape feature
Related Listing(s)
Location of Supporting Documentation

Alberni Valley Museum and Archives

Cross-Reference to Collection
Links   http://www.city.port-alberni.bc.ca/
Category of Property   Public - local
Federal/Provincial/Territorial Identifier

5304-5344 Argyle Street/ 3074 Kingsway Avenue
Carmoor Block
Other Names Swale Rock Café Building

Figure 4: Carmoor 1912

Figure 5: Carmoor 2006

Statement of Significance

Description of Historic Place

The Carmoor Block is a two- and three- storey brick commercial/residential building located on the northeast corner of Argyle Street and Kingsway Avenue. It is distinguished by its beveled corner, grand central entrance, and three storefronts with bay entrances. The façade of the building is articulated by large-scale concrete pilasters on its lower storey.

Heritage Value

Built by businessmen Alfred Carmichael and Charles A. Moorhead, the Carmoor Block is valued as a product of the grand commerce associated with the establishment of Port Alberni as the west coast terminus of the E & N Railway. Built in two phases between 1910 and 1912, this substantial brick building reflects both the early economic and physical development of the town. Originally designed for commercial businesses such as the Alberni Land Company and the Bank of Montreal, and for professional offices in its upper stories, it is a reflection of the financial optimism which was shaping Port Alberni in the early twentieth century.

Notably, the Carmoor Block is one of Port Alberni's oldest surviving commercial buildings.

Character-Defining Elements
The character-defining elements of the Carmoor Block include:
- The flat-roofed, two and three storey form, and its street level configuration which includes four primary storefronts, and one office space on Kingsway Avenue.
- Surviving elements of its original grand design, including its beveled corner, concrete pilasters on lower storey, cornices, window and door openings, and the grand entrance and stairwell to the upper storey.
- Original construction materials, including its brick and concrete exterior and wooden interior structural members.
- Surviving historic windows over storefronts and tiles under windows at street level.
- Surviving original fixtures and finishes, included subway tiles shipped from England in the grand entrance, wooden flooring, and window and door hardware.
- 10' ceilings in the upper storey spaces.
- Surviving physical evidence of its original commercial functions, seen in the two walk-in vaults on the main floor.

Formal Recognition

Recognition Type   Heritage Registration
Recognition Enactment
Recognition Date

Location

Province/Territory   British Columbia
Community   Port Alberni
Location Description   Harbour Quay
Cadastral Identifier   P.I.D. 024-645-231

Historical Information

Construction Date(s)
          From   1910
          To   1912
Significant Date(s)
Theme – Category and Type   Developing Economies – Trade and Commerce
                                        Developing Economies – Trade and Commerce
                                        Expressing Intellectual and Cultural Life –
                                        Architecture and Design
Function – Category and Type   Commercial Building
Associated Architect/ Builder

Architect
Builder   Alfred Charmichael
                    Charles A. Moorhead

Additional Information

Contributing Resources   1 building
Related Listing(s)
Location of Supporting Documentation
                            Alberni Valley Museum and Archives
Cross-Reference to Collection
Links
Category of Property   Private
Federal/Provincial/Territorial Identifier

4888 Johnston Road
Alberni Post Office
Other Names

Figure 6: Northeast corner

Figure 7: Entrance detail

Statement of Significance

Description of Historic Place
The Alberni Post Office is a one and one half story brick building with a basement. It is located on the corner of Johnston Road and Gertrude Street. It has a flat roof and an articulated entrance.

Heritage Value
The value of the Alberni Post Office lies in its ability to evoke a sense of the past when the post office was the heart of the community and a central meeting place for the citizens of Alberni. The post office is a testament to the community identity which distinguishes Alberni from Port Alberni.

As a landmark building, the post office is also valued for its architecture. Its Art Deco style is important as a symbol of permanence and modernity in Alberni's history. Built in the key modern aesthetic of its day, the 1939 post office reflects its importance in the community, and stands as a monument to the value of Alberni's early identity and status as an important centre for the logging and fishing industries. The post office is a valued

reflection of the status and modernity of this community in the first half of the twentieth century.

 The post office is also important as the only early symbol of the federal presence in this small town. Its architecture and styling reflect the national emergence of the "modern post office" which included the introduction of both trans-Atlantic and trans-Canadian airmail service.

The situation of the post office at the corner of Johnston Road and Gertrude Street is noteworthy as it was and remains a central location for business section of Alberni. It is important to note that land on which this building sits was donated by Mr. L.W.H. Marcon in 1914, specifically for the location of a post office, reflecting an early desire to establish this part of town as a desirable location for business.   The 1939 building is the second post office to stand at this location.

The cultural value of this historic site is evident in its continuous use as a post office since 19l4.

Character-Defining Elements
The character-defining elements of the Alberni Post Office include:
- its one and one half storey massing
- its basement
- its interior spatial configurations which relate to its 1939 design
- identification of the place as a post office seen in elements such as signs, post boxes, -counter etc
- its Art Deco design (simple lines, flat roof, articulated entrance)
- location at the corner of Johnston Road and Gertrude Street
- its brick construction
- existing wooden windows and doors
- the sense of place in the interior, seen in the prewar, mid 20th century interior design
- all surviving historic fixtures and fittings dating from 1939 on

Formal Recognition

Recognition Type   Heritage Registration
Recognition Enactment
Recognition Date

Location

Province/Territory   British Columbia
Community   Port Alberni
Location Description   Northport Downtown core district
Cadastral Identifier   P.I.D. 005-518-890

Historical Information

Construction Date(s)
        From 1939
        To   1939
Significant Date(s)
Theme – Category and Type   Developing Economies – Trade and Commerce
                                    Developing Economies – Trade and Commerce
                                    Expressing Intellectual and Cultural Life –
                                    Architecture and Design
Function – Category and Type   Post Office - Historic
                                    Post Office - Current
Associated Architect/ Builder
        Architect
        Builder   Thor Peterson

Additional Information

Contributing Resources   1 building
Related Listing(s)
Location of Supporting Documentation
                                    Alberni Valley Museum and Archives
Cross-Reference to Collection
Links
Category of Property   Public - Federal
Federal/Provincial/Territorial Identifier

3100 Kingsway Avenue
Port Alberni Train Station
Other Names

Figure 8: Train Station

Figure 9: Rear elevation

Statement of Significance

Description of Historic Place
This one and one-half storey building is of a typical Canadian Pacific Railway station design with former station agent family quarters on the second floor. The 'Tuscan' brown exterior wood siding on the bottom is accented with cream trim, large wooden brackets support the overhang of the cedar-shingled roof. The exterior walls of the second storey are cover with cedar shingles as well. On the Kingsway street side there is a seven bay, concrete and brick, flat roofed, freight truck extension.

Heritage Value
The railway station is valued as a key early entry and departure point in the city. It represents a connection with other Vancouver Island communities associated with travel by both rail and road between 1912 and 1970. It is also significant that this building continued to function in its original capacity after rail travel diminished and automobile traffic increased. Its current use for the tourist railroad reflects the historic value of rail travel within the community.

Built in 1911 from drawings done by R.A. Bainbridge, the railway station evokes the sense of importance that was associated with rail travel in Port Alberni in the first half of the twentieth century. The 1950s additions to the train station are significant as reflections of the changing nature of transport and business in the community, as truck freight traffic took the place of rail.

Because this building has played an important role in the development of this community, the city purchased the property and a group of volunteers restored the station to its original appearance in 1990.

Character-Defining Elements
The character-defining elements of the Port Alberni Train Station include:
Exterior -
- One and one-half story CPR design
- wooden horizontal lap siding on lower storey with cedar shingle on the exterior of the second storey.
- Wooden bracing supporting roof overhang
- Cedar shingle hip roof with dormers over second storey windows
- Wooden exterior painted in CPR traditional Tuscan brown with cream trim
- Station telegraphers' bay window facing the railroad tracks
- two large freight doors on the track side
- Port Alberni 'station' signs on north and south ends of building
- Its physical relationship to the railway tracks and to the streets

Truck Freight Extension (on East side of building)
- seven bay merchandising freight bays
- five wooden roll-up overhead doors and two bricked-in bays on the north and south sides
- one wooden door and two bricked-in panels comprise the east side
- concrete flat roof with a tar and gravel overlay

Formal Recognition

Recognition Type   Heritage Designation
Recognition Enactment Bylaw #3963
Recognition Date   April 9, 1990

Recognition Type   Heritage Registration
Recognition Enactment
Recognition Date

Location

Province/Territory   British Columbia
Community   Port Alberni

Location Description   Harbour Quay
Cadastral Identifier   P.I.D. 015-177-327

Historical Information

Construction Date(s)
        From 1911
        To 1911
Significant Date(s)   1951 – building extended 30 ft south, second storey removed
                1959 – Trucking bays added to East side
                1990 – purchased by City of Port Alberni
                1990 – second storey added and exterior restored to 1912
                appearance
Theme – Category and Type   Developing Economies – Communications and
                                Transportation
Function – Category and Type   Station or Other Rail Facility - Historic
Associated Architect/ Builder
        Architect/Designer R.A. Bainbridge
        Builder

Additional Information

Contributing Resources   1 building
Related Listing(s)
Location of Supporting Documentation
                        Alberni Valley Museum and Archives
Cross-Reference to Collection
Links
Category of Property   Public - local
Federal/Provincial/Territorial Identifier