

# *Welcome to the City of Courtenay Heritage Register Open House!*

**The main goals of this workshop are:**

- **Have an understanding of what Courtenay's heritage is all about.**
- **Determine the themes that have shaped Courtenay's history.**
- **Explore potential sites for inclusion on the heritage register that the community considers valuable.**

To gather this important information, there are several display boards which provide the necessary background information regarding various aspects of Courtenay's heritage. The displays which require community feedback will feature a corresponding comment sheet. When filling out a comment sheet, please remember that there are no wrong answers! If a question is unclear, please do not hesitate to ask a consultant or City staff member for assistance.

While filling out a comment sheet is valuable, you should not feel compelled to answer everything (of course if you want to that's excellent!) If you feel you need more time to ponder a particular question, please feel free to take the comment sheet(s) home and return them to the City of Courtenay Planning department by January 15.



# *The City of Courtenay Heritage Register*

## **What is a heritage register?**

A heritage register is a formal list of properties identified by the City of Courtenay as having heritage value.



## **What does a heritage register do?**

- Enables monitoring of proposed changes to historic properties through the local government licensing and permit application process.
- Provides formal recognition for historic properties.
- Has legal status; provides access to powerful tools within the Local Government Act.
- Adopted by Council resolution.

## **What does a heritage register not do?**

- Limit on a property owner's ability to make changes to his or her historic place.
- Constitute formal designation.
- Require the agreement of a property owner to include a historic place as a register listing.
- Create a financial burden for the local government.

## **What are the benefits of a heritage register?**

- It can enhance the public's appreciation of the character and identity of the community.
- It can facilitate public access to community heritage information.
- Provides a means of informing a property owners and prospective buyers of a property's heritage value.
- Can integrate heritage conservation activities with the planning process which can play a role in enhancing community sustainability.
- May provide opportunities for special provisions within the BC Building Code, and other similar financial incentives.
- Allows a local government to pursue protective action measures such as temporarily withholding demolition and building permits, and ordering heritage inspections.



# *Courtenay Heritage Register Timeline*

The development of Courtenay's heritage register encompasses numerous steps. The following list highlights the steps taken thus far, and will look at where the project is heading over the next couple of months.

## **September 2008**

- City staff approaches Council seeking authorization to proceed with the development of a Courtenay Community Heritage Register and apply for the necessary funding from the BC Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts.

## **October/November 2008**

- City of Courtenay awarded funding for the register initiative.
- Heritage consultants selected.
- Stakeholder group formed to guide the register process.

## **December 2008**

- Stakeholder group identifies several community themes and values and selects 5 potential sites for inclusion on the heritage register.
- Consultants review available historical material and City documents, and conduct field studies for the 5 sites selected by the stakeholder group.

## **January 2009**

- Public open house conducted, aimed at compiling community feedback which will be used when writing the 'statements of significance;' the central documentation requirement for each historic place selected for inclusion on the register. Public asked to identify Courtenay's heritage, including themes, values and sites which should be included on the register.

*we are here* 

- Consultants compile information derived at the public open house.
- 'Statements of significance' are written for the 20 historical properties selected and are reviewed by stakeholder group.

## **February/March 2009**

- Register records are compiled into City online database and are made available to the public.
- Courtenay register adopted by Council Resolution.
- Property owners and the heritage branch of the Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts are notified of Council's resolution.



# *Courtenay's Heritage*

To start off this open house, we believe it would be useful to get everyone to think about what heritage means to them. The great thing about heritage is that there is no single definition and can be interpreted in numerous ways. Many people, for instance, believe that old buildings or influential people embody heritage.

While this interpretation of heritage is an excellent starting point, the concept can also be extended to encompass anything that the community has inherited which we want to preserve for future generations. Examples can include natural features such as ancient trees and important Rivers, to relatively recent buildings that represent the character of the community. Heritage can also encompass intangible features such as folklore, songs, stories and customs.

Heritage, in short, is a living legacy and provides context for our past and influences our future.

On the comment sheet, entitled "Courtenay Heritage," please answer the following questions:

- What do you think of when you think of heritage in general?
- Why is heritage important to you in your community?
- What do you think defines Courtenay's heritage?



# *Courtenay Heritage Context, Themes and Sub-Themes*

The consultants drafting the Courtenay Heritage Register are currently conducting a historical context study which aims to identify the overarching historical influences that have shaped the evolution of Courtenay's history. Heritage does not occur in a vacuum. We need to know the surrounding history to make sense of a heritage place, and to understand its importance.

Out of the context study emerges historical themes. Themes help us take a broader look at heritage by considering all peoples, places, and traditions at all time periods. The following list highlights the themes that have been identified thus far by the context study that have contributed to Courtenay's heritage.

## **Natural Environment**

- Natural Features (Courtenay River, Estuary, and Delta)
- Pre-Historic Courtenay (Fossils in Puntledge River)
- Biological processes (Salmon runs, migration of birds)

## **Inhabiting the Land**

- First Nations settlements (Pentlatch and K'omoks people)
- Early exploration (Early Naval reports, Captain Courtenay)
- Pioneer settlements (Early pre-emptions, reasons for settlement)
- East/Old Courtenay (Area around the slough and River, early development)
- West/New Courtenay (Pidcock's mill, first bridge, Joseph McPhee, Orchard and Terminal Addition sub-divisions)
- Development of Automobile/ Shift to Suburbs (development outside 1915 City boundaries)

## **Developing Local Economies**

- Agricultural Roots (early agricultural economies, dairying legacy, Comox Creamery)
- Logging Roots (aboriginal logging operations, early logging methods, introduction of steam power, Comox logging and railway company, Courtenay's sawmills)
- Development of the downtown (evolution of commercial district over the past century)

## **Communication and Transportation**

- Railway transportation (E&N railway)
- River networks (Transportation on the Courtenay River)
- Development of Roads and Bridges (Dyke and Back Roads, evolution of River bridges)

## **Institutional Development**

- Early Religious Institutions (Anglican and Presbyterian legacies in Courtenay)
- Early Schools (evolution of education in Courtenay's)
- Post Office (First Post Office in McPhee block, move to corner of 4th street and Cliffe)
- Incorporation: 1915 (reasons for incorporation)
- Fire Department (downtown fires, establishment of fire department, early fire suppression methods)
- Military history (military camps at Sandwick, WW2 Combined Ops Training at Simms and Lewis Park)

## **Social and Community Life**

- Community Halls (old Agricultural Hall, Native Sons Hall)
- Community and Religious Organizations
- Community Efforts (mile of flowers, civic square)
- Sports and Leisure
- Fall Fairs
- Parks and Greenway Legacy

**On the comment sheet provided, please answer the following questions:**

- **Are there any other elements of Courtenay's history that we've missed?**
- **Are there any themes identified that are particularly important to Courtenay's history?**



# Heritage Values

The last display highlights that there are many themes which define the history of Courtenay. While themes are extremely useful in establishing a historical context, they do not allow us to decide which aspect of Courtenay's history is most important. This leads us to a conversation about heritage 'values'. Values allow us to ask the 'why' question when trying to understand how significant a particular resource is compared to other similar resources.

For example, if a community has 100 similar heritage buildings, how do we decide which ones to preserve? Which ones are the most important to the community? To answer these important questions, we need a framework that allows us to make these distinctions, which is provided by the identification of heritage values.

Using the example of 100 heritage buildings, if we were to discover that a particular building was once the home of an influential politician, the value we would be highlighting would be the association with a person of historical significance.

The purpose of the following displays is to stimulate some ideas about what types of properties in Courtenay epitomize certain values. Compiling these ideas will provide the central criteria for determining which properties are deemed worthy of including on the heritage register. Identifying community heritage values, therefore, allows us to answer the question "why is this heritage resource important?"

Heritage values are the aesthetic, historic, scientific, cultural, social or spiritual importance or significance of heritage for past, present or future generations. The following boards will take a look at each type of value and will provide some correlating Courtenay examples for discussion.

## Note:

**When filling out the following comment sheets, it is important to note that there are three heritage places in Courtenay that are formally designated by bylaw. Since this legislation provides more protection than the Courtenay Register, the following sites will not be included on the Register:**

- The Native Sons Hall
- The Courtenay E&N Terminal Station
- Sandwick Memorial Cairn



# *Aesthetic Values*

Aesthetic values are defined by the Heritage Branch of the Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts as being “concerned with beauty or the appreciation of beauty; or the set of principles behind the work of a particular artist or artistic movement.” Aesthetic values can be used to justify the addition of a resource on the register because the beauty epitomized by the heritage site sets it apart from other similar sites.

These ‘aesthetic’ values can be exemplified in:

- Art, architecture or design;
- Unique building materials or landscape materials;
- Exceptional Workmanship or Craftsmanship;
- Environmental features, such as setting, landmark or location.

There are a number of local examples in Courtenay which could be deemed to have ‘aesthetic’ values based on the information noted above. Here are some examples:

## **Native Sons Hall (1928)**

- Excellence represented by unique architecture (unique cantilevered roof with angled brackets)
- Incorporates indigenous building materials (constructed entirely of local timber)
- Use of new technologies and building methods that created the largest free-standing log structure in Canada

## **The View of the Comox Glacier**

- Picturesque view from 5th Street greatly adds to the character of the downtown core
- Coast Salish legend reflects the importance of oral history

**On the comment sheet provided, please answer the following question:**

- **Can you think of any other places in Courtenay that embody aesthetic values?**



# Historic Values

Historic values are relatively straight forward. These values have anything to do with importance to local history, or likely to be seen as important in the future.

Historical values can be shown in:

- Age or oldness.
- Association with historical events which have contributed to patterns of Courtenay's history.
- Association with an artist, architect, designer, craftsmen or gardener
- Association with persons of historical importance.
- Association with important historical themes.
- Use or expression as a way of life.
- A significant stage in the development of the community.

Thinking broadly, there are numerous potential sites in Courtenay which could encompass these types of 'historic values'. Here are a couple of examples:

## 'Dyke' Road

- Age (over 120 years old)
- Facilitated trade and transportation
- Agricultural significance; built to protect crops from the elements
- Still used today and part of everyday life
- Protection from floods facilitated permanent settlement in 'Old' Courtenay, around the slough and east side of Courtenay River.

## Native Sons Hall

- Constructed in 1928
- Construction supervised by Bill Eastman, one of Canada's foremost bridge builders
- Building reflects philanthropy of native sons, and many local elites who invested money and contributed timber for construction
- Continued use as a community hall reflects Courtenay's recreational values

**On the comment sheet provided, please answer the following question:**

- **Can you think of any other places in Courtenay that demonstrate 'historic' values? If so, why?**





# *Spiritual Values*

Spiritual values have to do with any type of place that reflects any kind of religion or religious belief.

One might find spiritual values reflected in:

- Systems or belief
- Religious values
- Spiritual ceremonies

In Courtenay, there are clearly numerous places today which resonate religious values, or have an association with religion in the past. Here are some examples:

## **St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church**

- Built in 1877 by Presbyterian Church members
- Site reflects Presbyterian values

## **Courtenay Recreation Building (site of Old Agricultural hall)**

- Site initially served as temporary church for Presbyterians
- Meeting place for organizations such as the "Comox District Temperance Movement and Mutual Improvement Society"

**On the comment sheet provided, please answer the following question:**

- **Can you think of any places in Courtenay that are valuable because they embody some aspect of spiritual values? If so, what is particularly valuable about the place you chose?**



# Scientific Values

Scientific values can be significant in a variety of ways. They can be represented by the sheer uniqueness of a natural feature, or they can be represented by engineering feats such as the construction of a bridge, dam or building. Scientific values can be reflected by:

- The ability to impart knowledge or information about the past;
- A rarity or uniqueness;
- An ability to demonstrate design, function, technique, process and style;
- Relationship of natural and cultural features.

Thinking broadly, there are numerous potential sites in Courtenay which could encompass some of these scientific values noted above. Here are some examples:

## Fossils in the Puntledge River

- Discovery of Elasmosaurus (only discovery made west of Rocky Mountains)
- Instills knowledge of Courtenay's pre-historic past

## Courtenay River Estuary

- Considered single most important wintering site in the world for the protected Trumpeter Swan
- Instills knowledge of numerous biological processes such as Salmon runs, and bird migration

## Garry Oaks in Courtenay

- Most northerly stands of species in North America
- Potential to foster future studies of conservation based on unique climate in Courtenay that fosters the growth of Garry Oaks

Based on these examples, can you think of any other particular sites in Courtenay that could reflect these 'scientific' values? If so, how do they characterize this value?



# *Cultural and Social Values*

Cultural and social values can be described as an attachment to places that are essential reference points for a community's identity. These include places where major events took place, meeting and gathering places, and places of tradition, ritual and ceremony.

Cultural and social values can be reflected in:

- Community and cultural traditions;
- Use over time;
- Memory or memorial;
- Legends, stories;
- Lifeways, folkways, ways of doing things;
- Ways of connecting with a place.

Based on the points noted above, there are several potential sites in Courtenay that could embody cultural and social values. Here are some examples:

## **Events at the Exhibition Grounds**

- Have hosted a variety of fall fairs and agricultural events for over a century.

## **Sandwick Cairn**

- Erected in 1922
- Site of Remembrance Day ceremonies since its inception
- Reflects Courtenay's contribution to international conflicts

## **Legend of 'Queneesh' (Comox Glacier)**

- Coast Salish legend reflects the importance of oral history

**On the comment sheet provided, please answer the following questions:**

- **Can you think of any other historical places in Courtenay that reflect cultural and social values? If so, how do they embody these values?**
- **What is particularly valuable about looking at Courtenay's cultural and social background?**



# First Five Resources Selected for Courtenay Heritage Register

The Courtenay Heritage Register Stakeholder Group has recently identified five sites based on their value to Courtenay's heritage that will be included on the register. In ranked order, these five sites are:



Photo: Boomer Jerritt

## 1. 5th Street

- What kind of heritage values does 5th Street embody that make it unique?
- What broad historical themes specific to Courtenay's history does 5th Street represent?
- What are some important features (i.e. notable signs, views, etc) of 5th Street that you think make it unique?



Photo: Boomer Jerritt

## 2. The Courtenay River

- What kind of heritage values does the Courtenay River embody?
- What broad historical themes of Courtenay's history does the River reflect?
- What are some features that you think make the Courtenay River unique?



## 3. Courtenay Library

- What historic values does the Courtenay Library embody?
- What are some broad historical themes specific to Courtenay's history that the library reflects? (note: the Comox Creamery building once occupied the current library site)
- What are some important physical characteristics of the library that you think make it unique?



Photo: Boomer Jerritt

## 4. Courtenay Riverway

- What heritage values does the Courtenay Riverway embody?
- What are some broad historical themes specific to Courtenay's history that the Riverway reflects? (note: the current Riverway was once the rail line for the Comox and Logging & Railway Company)
- What are some important characteristics of the Riverway that you think make it unique?



## 5. Courtenay & District Museum (former Post Office)

- What heritage values does the museum embody?
- What are some broad historical themes specific to Courtenay's history that the museum reflects?
- What are some physical characteristics of the museum that you think make it unique?

