

Conservation Plan

6825 West Boulevard, Vancouver, BC V6A 3E8

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Statement of Significance

6825 West Boulevard, Vancouver, BC

Description of Historic Place

The Twiss Residence is a large two storey Craftsman-style residence situated on a substantial parcel of land on the west side of the 6800 block of West Boulevard facing the Arbutus Greenway in the Kerrisdale neighbourhood of Vancouver, BC.

Heritage Value

The Twiss Residence, is significant for its Craftsman Style and as one of the few remaining large estate-like properties associated with the early residential development of the Point Grey municipality prompted in part by the nearby BC Electric interurban station, and for its long association with its original owner William James Twiss the British Columbia manager for Mutual Life of Canada

Built in 1912, the Twiss Residence is valued as a significant example of the Craftsman Style characterized here with large gables, deep eaves and the prominent porch that wraps around the north and west sides of the house. Additionally, the property is valued as the last remaining lot of an eight lot subdivision promoted by newspaper advertisements as “a residential district of the most desirable class” Mr Twiss’ neighbours including financier W.A. Arnold, the Ingledew, and Spencer families reflected this aspiration.

The spacing of interurban stations saw pockets of development This pocket of residential development was centred around the BC Electric’s Magee station, which provided a convenient commute to downtown Vancouver.

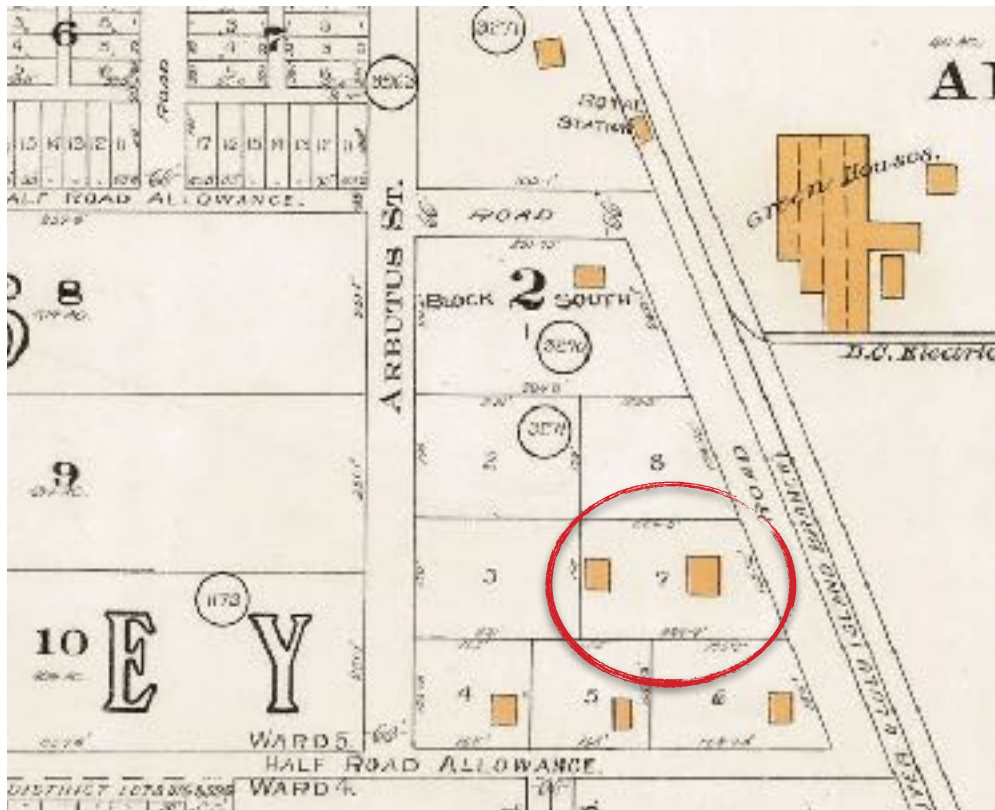
Social and cultural value is found with the property’s long association with William James Twiss. The prominent businessman, property developer, military man and politician lived in the house from its construction until played a prominent role in the bankruptcy of the Dominion Trust Company.

Character Defining Elements

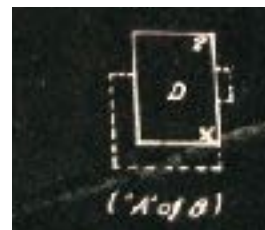
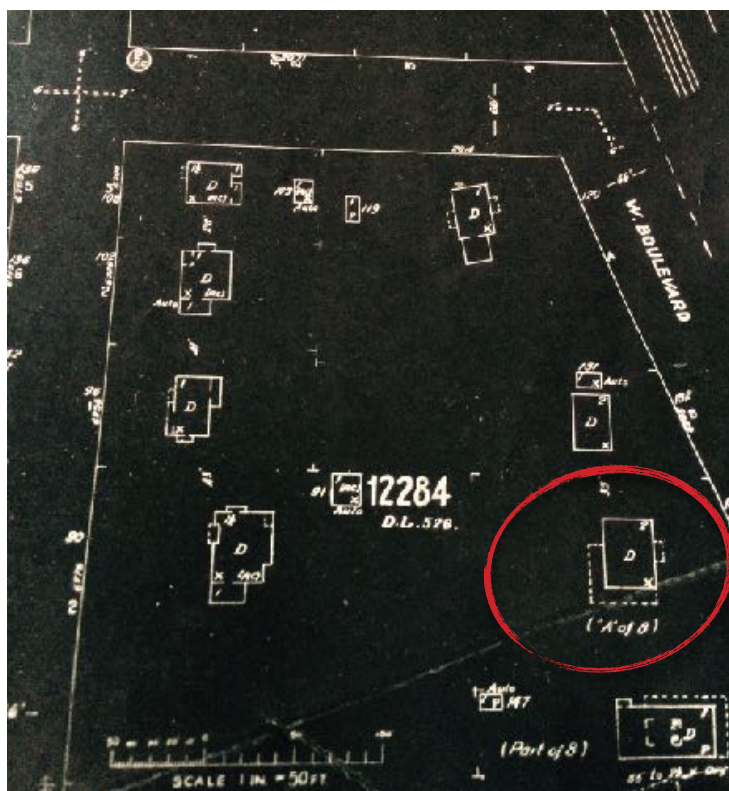
The elements that define the character of the Twiss Residence are:

- its continuous residential use
- siting and position of the house on the eastern edge of a large sloping lot
- residential form, scale and massing as expressed in its two storey height, gabled roof, wood frame construction, square-cut shingle cladding of the upper storey, narrow ship lap siding on the lower floor, exposed rafters, and open knee brackets under the eaves
- porch wraps around the north and west sides of the house supported on ragged granite columns,
- porch columns with mortise and tenon details
- original casement windows with stained glass in the transom
- stained glass windows on the eastern wall
- granite basement walls
- mature trees on the site including the Cypress at driveway entrance, part of the original landscaping

Maps



1912 Fire Insurance map showing 6825 West Boulevard in the eight lot subdivision of block 2 south.



Fire Insurance map updated to 1930 showing the original houses in the subdivision and the further division of lot 1. Eventually all of the lots would be subdivided into smaller parcels.



Aerial view of the Twiss residence in 2013 showing the extent of the existing property. The yellow lines indicate the original parcel size.



Aerial view of the Twiss residence in 1948 from the Goodyear blimp showing how prominent the house is in its location overlooking Southwest Marine Drive and the Fraser River. CVA 1184-3420

Background

Originally from Ireland, William James Twiss arrived in the province in 1888 and settled in Kaslo. While in the interior, Twiss was active as a financial agent and involved in real estate, developing buildings in Greenwood, Fernie and Hedley. Twiss became involved in William Shatford's South Okanagan Land Company, was appointed a Lieutenant in the Kaslo Rifles, and became a member of the Rocky Mountain Rangers No. 4 Company. After moving to Vancouver, he maintained links to Kaslo and was a frequent visitor to the region.

In 1900 he joined Mutual Life of Canada and became the manager of their Vancouver office in 1903, and eventually becoming the BC representative for the company, a post he would hold until he retired in the 1940s. He was described in the 1908 publication *Vancouver Illustrated* as a 'talented businessman and insurance expert of wide experience... and at all times been identified with [British Columbia's] leading interests.'

In Vancouver his interests in civic life were wide ranging. He was a member of the 100,000 Club, a group promoting the growth of the city; he was appointed an honorary member of the Duke of Connaught's Rifles, became a warden at Christ Church and as a member of the congregation of St Mary's in Kerrisdale helped finance the parish hall. He was elected to the Point Grey school board, and after amalgamation served for two one year terms on Vancouver city council. Twiss, while on city council moved the motion to create the Vancouver Archives. He was president of the Vancouver Pioneers Association and numerous other groups.

Twiss married Sadie Jewel Brenton in 1906. As a couple they were popular amateur singers, appearing at many concerts in the city and interior.

A notable incident in his career saw Twiss become involved in the bankruptcy of the Dominion Trust Company, one of the larger financial scandals in the province. In June 1917, Twiss obtained a foreclosure order on their building at Homer and Pender because of defaults on mortgage payments to Mutual Life of Canada. His seizure of the building surprised everyone, including the liquidator. A guard was posted at the entrance to prevent staff and the public from entering and removing assets. The action resulted in lots of claims and counter claims and court action and played in the papers for days.

Twiss lived in his home on West Boulevard, which he called 'Doonties' after a county in Ireland, until 1946. He moved to a new house nearby and passed away in 1953.

Photographs



The house from the rear looking to the northeast showing the porch with its granite piers, the alterations with the expansion of a room into the porch cutting it in two. On the upper floors the two sleeping porches have been glassed in to provide additional living space.



East and north side of the house showing the entrance off the porch and the bay window under the porch roof.



East side of the house showing the entrance and alterations to the facade



East side of the house looking from the kitchen porch showing the granite foundation



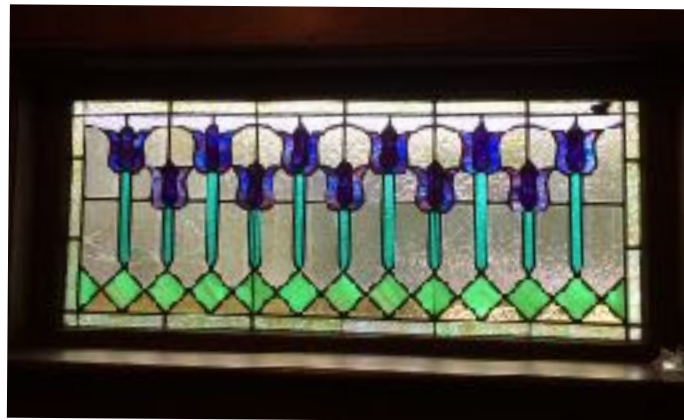
East and south side of the house with kitchen porch showing the addition of a dormer on the side gable.



South side of the house with kitchen porch showing the closed in sleeping porch.

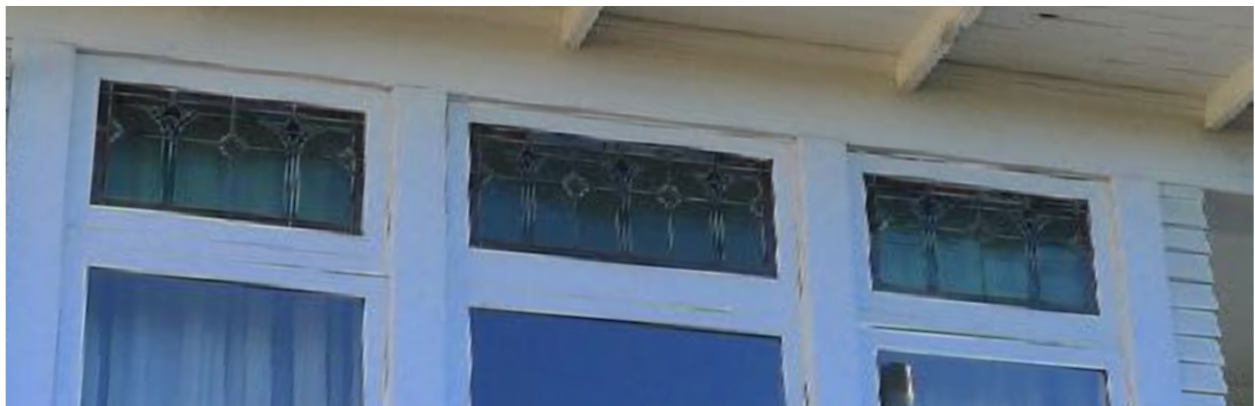


The stone piers and basement foundation showing the standing seam mortar joints



The tulip design stained glass windows on the east side of the house

The transoms of the first and second floor windows features stained glass in a geometric pattern



Current Condition

Overall the house is in good condition and the majority of the character defining elements are intact. Much of the wrap-around veranda has been glassed in, though without any alteration to the body of the house except for a renovation on the west side where a wall and windows have been moved forward into a portion of the veranda. The smaller kitchen porch on the south side has been enclosed as have the three sleeping porched in the north, west and south gables.

A dormer has been added to the east side of the south facing gable, and a chimney on the south wall has been removed with a resulting patch. The west and south facing sleeping porches have been closed with the addition of windows. Two windows on the east side appear to be later additions.

On the east side on the second floor a door appears to have been added though its purpose is unclear. None of the renovations mar the overall character of the house.

Exterior

The house is a large two storey side-gabled Craftsman-style residence with centrally placed north and south facing dormers. A veranda with low pitched roof wraps around the east, north and west sides of the house and sits on granite piers over a coursed rubble foundation with beaded mortar joints. The veranda has a simple balustrade with posts that feature applied mortise and tendon details. A flat roofed porch at the kitchen entry is on the south side of the house. Both veranda and porch have closed soffits of tongue and groove with narrow applied brackets.

Exterior finishing consists of square-but cedar shingles on the upper floors and narrow shiplap siding on the ground floor separated by a horizontal band with moulding detail. The shingles flare out to meet the band. There is a substantial belt board between the siding and foundation.

Gables and dormers are trimmed with wide verge boards with large open knee braces under the open soffits. Each gable and dormer has different trim and window detail. A quad set of casements is found in the north dormer and a triple set is found in the east gable. The south dormer and west gable have windows which infill the original sleeping porch openings.

The veranda, kitchen porch and east side of the house have closed soffits

Original windows in the house include casements in single, paired and triple assemblies with leaded glass in the transoms and unadorned trim. On the east wall there is a single casement and a piano window featuring a tulip design in stained glass.

The original front entrance is on the east side of the veranda and includes the original panelled door with leaded window, side lights and hardware. A canted bay protrudes into the veranda next to the entrance.

Interior

The ground floor is remarkably intact retaining many of the original features, including trims, staircase, doors, wall coverings and fixtures. Major alterations have occurred in the kitchen area.

Stained glass is a dominant feature throughout the house, all transoms feature the same glass pattern.

Other Craftsman details include fireplaces with mantles and brick details. Woodwork such as built in cabinetry, wainscotting, coffered ceilings, door and window trim, and floors. original hardware survive in many rooms.

Conservation Objective

The conservation objective for the Twiss Residence is to maintain and respect the existing character defining elements through a program of retention, restoration, and where necessary, the replication of historic elements. It is understood the house will retain its original siting on the lot and overall form.

The following definitions are from the Standards & Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (2nd edition).

Restoration - *the action or process of accurately revealing, recovering or representing the state of a historic place or of an individual component, as it appeared at a particular period in its history, while protecting its heritage value*

Rehabilitation - *repair rather than replace character-defining elements. Where character-defining elements are too severely deteriorated to repair, and where sufficient physical evidence exists, replace them with new elements that match the forms, materials and detailing of sound versions of the same elements.*

- *conserve the heritage value and character-defining elements when creating any new additions to a historic place or any related new construction. Make the new work physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to and distinguishable from the historic place.*

All interventions will be informed by archival photographs or surviving elements on the building. Before undertaking any work on the building the following conservation resources should be referred to:

- Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, Parks Canada <http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/pages/standards-normes.aspx>

All conservation treatments recommended in this Plan align with the building's Heritage Values and Character Defining Elements.

Materials

All replacement material for the exterior of the heritage structure should be high quality. Woods such as Spruce, Pine and Hemlock which easily rot should be avoided. Kiln-dried, tight-grained Douglas Fir which matches the original construction material is preferred. For larger items such as the verge boards engineered wood would enable the longer lengths required to replace and replicate the look of the originals.

Particular attention should be made to ensure the correct dimension of material is maintained. "Off the shelf" material may require cutting to fit a particular application. Attention should also be made to ensure all replacement mouldings and trim are the correct size, profile and surface texture - this is an important characteristic that defines a house's style. Care should be taken to observe and replicate original construction techniques in any repair and restoration work on the house.

It is recommended that the Standards and Guidelines for Exterior Masonry (Section 3 pages 7-14) of the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* be followed. (www.historicplaces.ca/media/7209/sandg_en.pdf)

Proposed Alterations

South Elevation: reconfiguration of the kitchen porch by enclosing and extending it to accommodate rear entrances for the units. New window matching existing examples and the roof pitch altered to match the main porch. The fragment of an old chimney left over from an earlier renovation on the second floor is removed and a new window matching existing examples is added in its place.

North Elevation: The ground has been levelled off, removing the slope to the west. The veranda is opened up and a new stair and entry is added to its west side. A small square window on the second floor has been removed.

West Elevation: A portion of the veranda is opened on the north west corner and a portion of the veranda at the south west corner is enclosed with the addition new windows that match existing examples.

East Elevation: The veranda at the north east corner is opened up and a new open porch is added to the south east side of the elevation which sits over a new garage. It draws details such as column details from the main house.

Conservation Procedures

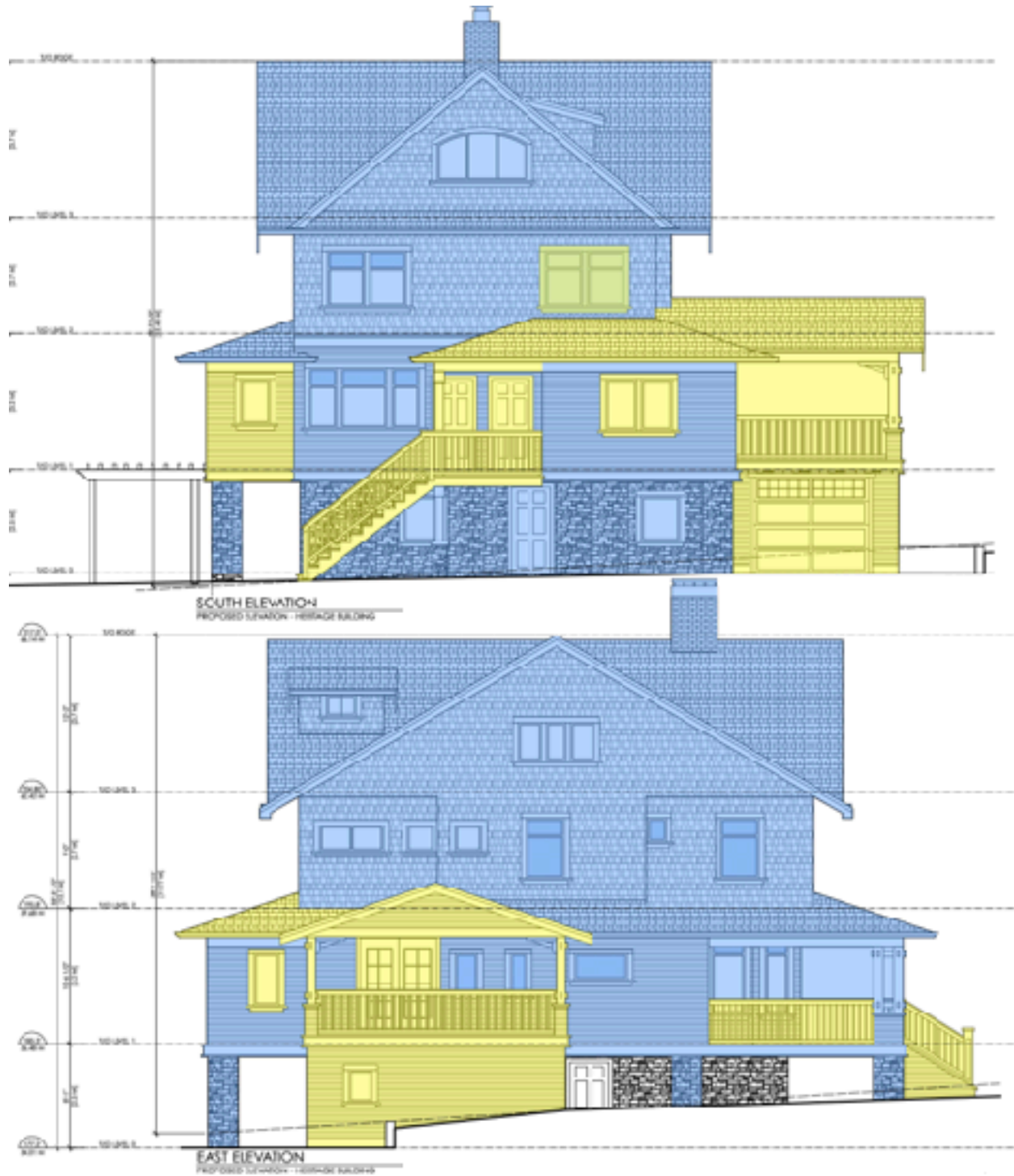
Components	Materials & Description	Condition	Approach	Recommendations
Exterior Conservation				
Siding & Trim: Shingles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Square cedar shingles with a four inch reveal on the upper floors of the house. • Shingles flare out above the belt board between the first and second floor and at the bottom edge of the east and west gables above the dentil detail. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shingles are in reasonable condition overall. There is some splitting and cracking on the weather exposed sides of the house. 	Retention, repair and restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • retain historic materials in place where possible • <i>retention of the exterior siding materials should be a top priority in negotiations with the City. The loss of original fabric and changes in wall dimensions can affect the overall look of the house</i> • repair and replace damaged shingles as necessary with new of same wood source and design • remove deteriorated paint with the gentlest methods possible • if the exterior cladding is required to be removed for rain screens then new material should match the original in dimension, reveal and surface texture

Components	Materials & Description	Condition	Approach	Recommendations
Lap siding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the lower floor is clad in narrow lap siding with a three inch reveal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the shiplap is in good condition overall. Much of it has been protected by the veranda. There is some splitting and cracked boards on the weather sides of the house 	Retention, repair and restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> retain historic materials in place where possible <i>retention of the exterior siding materials should be a top priority in negotiations with the City. The loss of original fabric and changes in wall dimensions can affect the overall look of the house</i> repair and replace damaged siding as necessary with new of same wood source and design remove deteriorated paint with the gentlest methods possible if the exterior cladding is required to be removed, new material should match the original in dimension, reveal and surface texture
Trim boards and moulding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the gables and dormers are trimmed with substantial verge boards. the upper and lower floors are separated by a belt board and wide belt board separates the lap siding from the foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the boards appear to be in good condition the belt board has some minor warping and bending as the house has settled 	Repair, renovation and retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> given the dimension and length of these first growth boards and their importance to the composition of the exterior they should be retained in situ. ensure trim boards and mouldings for the south porch and new porch on the east elevation match the dimension and surface texture of the existing elements
Knee braces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the gables and dormers have substantial knee braces under the eaves the north dormer has one knee brace at the centre of the peak the south dormer has five knee braces the east and west gables have seven knee braces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all of the knee braces appear to be in good condition there some minor cracks evident on the exposed ends 	Retention and repair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all of the knee braces should be retained and repaired where necessary remove deteriorated paint with the gentlest methods possible

Components	Materials & Description	Condition	Approach	Recommendations
Window Trim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Original window trim on all windows is flat and unadorned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> original window trim is in good condition overall requiring minor clean-up and repair 	Retention and repair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> repair and replace any damage as necessary with new of same wood source and design. remove deteriorated paint with the gentlest methods possible retain the trim, where possible, for reinstallation the building should exhibit some patina and signs of age where damaged source material to match dimension and surface texture
Soffits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the gables and dormers have open soffits of tongue and groove over a rafter parallel to the verge board the soffits of the veranda, kitchen porch and east side of the house are closed using tongue and groove decorative rafter ends are applied 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the open soffits are in good condition overall there is some deterioration and peeling paint along with some cracking and splitting of the tongue and groove wooden gutters on the veranda and kitchen porch have deteriorated and caused some localized damage to the closed soffits 	Retention and repair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> repair and replace any damage as necessary with new of same wood source and design. remove deteriorated paint with the gentlest methods possible the soffits are an important, if subtle, element of the home's design and the different soffit types should be preserved
Veranda columns and railings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the veranda and kitchen porch roofs are supported by columns with an applied mortise and tenon detail, sitting on plinths clad with lap siding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the columns and plinths are in good condition overall, however where the veranda was glassed in the railing has been removed 	Retention, repair and restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> retain and repair where necessary where the open veranda is retained, the surviving railing of square spindles and wide cap should replicated where necessary it is recommended that the railing be retained at plinth height and glass panels used to reach the required height for code thus preserving the correct proportions of the original architecture

Components	Materials & Description	Condition	Approach	Recommendations
<p>Windows</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • original windows in the house include casements in single, paired and triple assemblies with leaded glass in the transoms • there is a canted bay on the north east end of the veranda • the east wall has a single casement and a piano window featuring a tulip design in stained glass. • at the basement level there are four over four sash windows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the windows are in fair to good condition • windows on the veranda have been protected from the elements • sash windows at the basement are in good condition 	<p>Retention or rebuild</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • original window assemblies should be measured and used as the model for replacement windows • replacement windows must replicate the look, proportions and function of the original • original window openings should not be altered in height or width • original leaded glass must be retained and reinstalled in the new window assemblies. • stained glass should be placed on the outside face of the window to preserve the texture of the original window. Stained glass set behind or between glass reflects light and cannot be seen • during construction secure the stained glass to prevent theft or damage • new openings and window assemblies should be based on existing examples and not introduce new shapes or orientation
<p>Stonework</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the basement and piers supporting the veranda are of coursed rubble 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the stonework is in good condition overall • there are some visible repairs to the basement walls 	<p>Retention or material for reconstruction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the stonework is an important element of the house, care should be taken to retain the stone for reconstruction of the foundation and piers • care should be taken to match the mortar type and style of raised joints • it is recommended that a qualified masonry contractor over see the work

Components	Materials & Description	Condition	Approach	Recommendations
Paint and Colour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the house is currently painted white overall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> paint is in fair condition with peeling and cracking in many areas 	Repaint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Craftsman houses were bold and robust in their colour schemes, window assemblies were in dark colours, trim contrasted with the siding and different siding materials were painted in contrasting colours an appropriate colour scheme for the house could be developed based on an examination of the existing paint layers and or drawn from period paint charts
Interior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> many of the original features, including trims, staircase, doors, wall coverings and fixtures survive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the interior features are in good condition overall 	Retention and reuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in the reconfiguration of the interior consideration should be given to retaining, where appropriate, original features



Maintenance Plan

Following completion of the conservation works, the owner must maintain the building and land in good repair and in accordance with generally accepted maintenance standards. All work should follow *The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* (2nd Edition). The local government determines an acceptable level or condition to which the heritage building is maintained through the Heritage Maintenance Bylaw.

Maintenance is key to any heritage building and its continued conservation. Maintaining the building and land in good repair and in accordance with generally accepted maintenance standards is important. All work should follow *The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* (2nd Edition).

A building should be kept in a reasonable condition so it continues to function properly without incurring major expenses to repair deterioration from neglect. The most frequent source of deterioration problems are from lack of use, drainage failure, poorly maintained roofs, rainwater and destructive pests.

Establish a maintenance plan using the information below:

Maintenance Checklist

- Ensure site runoff drainage is directed away from building and that drains are not blocked.
- Do not permit vegetation (vines, etc.) to attach to the building.
- Review exterior, and interior where visible, for signs of settlement
- Ensure perimeter drainage is functioning satisfactorily
- In the relatively damp climate of the Lower Mainland, maintaining the integrity of exterior wood elements is critical. Annually inspect wood elements for signs of deterioration and take corrective repair/replacement action. Look for: wood in contact with ground or plantings; excessive cupping, loose knots, cracks or splits; open wood-to-wood joints or loose/missing fasteners;
- attack from biological growth (moss, moulds, etc.) or infestations (carpenter ants, etc.); animal damage or accumulations (chewed holes, nesting, bird/rodent droppings) take caution when cleaning droppings especially from rodents and pigeons
- Closely inspect highly exposed wood elements such as porches, railings and stairs for deterioration. Anticipate replacement in kind of these elements every 10-15 years.
- Inspect paint finishes every 3-5 years and expect full repainting every 7-10 years. Look for: bubbling, cracks, "alligatoring" or crazing, wrinkles, flaking, peeling or powdering; excessive fading of colours, especially dark tones;
- Inspect visible caulking joints for continuity and shrinkage.
- Expect to redo caulking every 3-5 years.
- Review flashings to ensure water runoff properly directed to the exterior and that flashing joints are intact.
- Windows and doors should be checked regularly and cracked or broken glass should be replaced as it occurs.

- Check satisfactory operation of windows and doors. They are crucial for ventilation and safe access. Poor operation can be a sign of building settlement distorting the frame, or sashes or doors may be warped.
- Check condition and operation of hardware for rust or breakage. Lubricate annually.
- Inspect weather stripping for excessive wear and integrity.