



SOUTH PORT KELLS Heritage Study

for The City of Surrey



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I. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

I.1 INTRODUCTION

The history of the South Port Kells area is reflected in small buildings on large properties often supplemented by out-buildings, such as barns, sheds, garages, stables, and other agricultural structures. Properties may also have small orchards, fields and significant landscaping features, including mature plantings. The social environment in the area is reflected in the architectural expression as well as the written and remembered history of the community.

South Port Kells has remained largely a rural community, dominated by small agricultural pursuits and subsistence farming, and its heritage value is found in its response to those conditions. Additionally, logging was important in the early development of the area, and determined the location of a number of heritage resources. Early transportation routes criss-cross and are evident throughout the area; for example, the right-of-way for the Great Northern Railway is now the alignment of Harvie Road.

The architecture may be more modest than in other parts of the City because of the rural setting; however, this current evaluation of architectural merit is scaled to the area's means and resources.

In addition to built heritage, South Port Kells also retain heritage plantings and landscapes that contribute to our understanding of its historic rural context. Many sites have mature trees and plantings, which contribute to the significance of siting and landscaping. Additionally, some sites have remnants of orchards with mature fruit trees. In some cases, contextual landscapes and large, mature trees encroach onto road right of ways, putting these natural heritage features at risk with the context of area redevelopment. As the area was primarily agricultural, the settings for the buildings have been culturally modified. Therefore the physical heritage of South Port Kells is as important as its built heritage in understanding its settlement, growth and development.

In addition, many of the existing identified heritage buildings sit within a modified landscape either planted or adapted for agricultural use. This includes trees planted as windbreaks, orchard remnants and specimen trees. Some of the property perimeter plantings of trees have grown to considerable size, and their retention will present a challenge when the roads through the area are widened.

1.2 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The study area, occupied in pre-Contact time by the Katzie and Semiahmoo First Nations, also contains three distinct sub-communities from the post-Contact area: Port Kells, Anniedale and Tynehead.

The Tynehead and Anniedale areas were among the first in Surrey to be settled by European settlers. Surveyed in 1859, the Coast Meridian was defined by the meridian of longitude closest to the Pacific coast at the 49th parallel. By 1860, the first pre-emption of Crown land was made by John Hasselwood, opposite Barnston Island. In the early 1860s, the three Bothwell brothers pre-empted land along the Coast Meridian Road (168th Street) near the headwaters of the Serpentine River. Access was originally provided by water transportation. The first commercial logging in the area was undertaken by the Royal City Mills in 1864, and logging continued to be a primary industry for a number of years. Temporary rail spurs (known as ‘shooflies’) were laid to facilitate the transportation of logs to market. Settlement occurred as logging and fishing developed in the area, but as the logs were depleted, agriculture became increasingly important, and ultimately became the predominant use.

In 1885, two Irish pioneers who shared the name of Henry Kells planned the town site of Port Kells. Their intention was to establish a fresh-water port on the Fraser River, and they chose a one square mile tract of waterfront straddling the Surrey and Langley municipal border as their site. This land was subdivided in 1889 into town lots. A wharf was established at the north foot of what is now 192 Street, and a store and post office soon followed. By 1891, the New Westminster Southern Railway was established, and the Kells donated sixteen acres near 190 Street and Harvie Road to ensure that a station would be built here. Major development failed to occur, and the area remained as a modest service centre for the local community.

In 1911, Sir Donald Mann and Sir William MacKenzie, co-builders of the Canadian National Railway, decided to establish Port Mann as their western terminus and a rival to Vancouver. It was anticipated that this would benefit Port Kells, and precipitated a small building boom in the area. Walter J. Walker, a real estate developer and former Surrey Reeve, donated money for construction of three Anglican churches in North Surrey in 1910, including a new St. Oswald's in Port Kells. Despite the development of extensive rail yards and warehouses at Port Mann, the CNR's grandiose plans for a major urban centre failed to materialize, and the boom in Port Kells also fizzled.

After the Great Northern Railway completed its Mud Bay route in 1909, service declined on the NWSR line, and by 1917 passenger service was discontinued. In 1929 the tracks were removed, and as the automobile was replacing the railway as the predominant means of transportation, the municipality purchased the rail right-of-way, and paved it for use as a route between Port Kells and Cloverdale. Named after Robert Harvie, pioneer logging locomotive operator and first engineer on the NWSR, at the time it was one of the few paved roads in Surrey.

Despite the many hopes for development of the area, over time the town lots in Port Kells reverted to agricultural use. Upon the completion of the Trans-Canada Highway in the 1960s, industrial development started to occur, facilitated by the new road access. Creeping suburban expansion has started to affect the area, and rapid change is anticipated as new road access is being planned for the area. Given the proximity to metropolitan area growth, a change-over from historical uses can now be forecast for the near future.

2. IDENTIFIED HERITAGE RESOURCES

2.1 HERITAGE BUILDINGS

There are a number of historic buildings, and their site context, that have been determined to have recognizable heritage significance through the Heritage Register evaluation process. These are the sites that are considered to have the greatest heritage value, and should be the primary focus for heritage conservation efforts.

Sites Currently on the Heritage Register

- Old Anniedale School, 9744 - 176 Street
(Heritage Designation)
- Tynehead Community Hall, 9568 - 168 Street
(Heritage Designation)
- Latimer Residence, 8534 - 192 Street
(Heritage Revitalization Agreement)
- Port Kells Fire Hall #7, 18922 - 88 Avenue
- Port Kells Post Office, 8764 Harvie Road
- Bulman's Garage, 8745 Harvie Road
- Anniedale Methodist, 19131 - 88 Avenue
- Anniedale Methodist Church Manse (Elliot House),
19131 - 88 Avenue
- Port Kells Elementary School, 19076 - 88 Avenue
- Carl Mathisen House, 8553 Harvie Road
- Decoupre House, 18456 - 88 Avenue
- Harvie Road

Site Proposed for Addition to the Heritage Register (2004)

- Preedy House (1920), 8871 Harvie Road
- Preedy Cottage (1922-1924). 8895 Harvie Road
- Harbidge House (c. 1930s), 17633 96 Avenue



Preedy House



Preedy Cottage



Harbidge House

**Sites Proposed for Addition to the
Heritage Register (2004) *continued***

- Gerow Barn (c. 1905), 9641 176 Street
- Rae House (c. 1930s), 9153 189 Street



Gerow Barn



Rae House

In addition, a number of other sites were not evaluated as having sufficient individual value to be recognized on the Heritage Register, but contribute to the character and ambience of the area. These sites could be preserved if opportunity allows, or else should be documented as per the recommendations of this report.

Additional Sites of Heritage Value

- Whiting House (c.1930s), 9108 184 Street
- Likila House (c.1930s), 9365 184 Street
- C.P. Smith Store (1929), Harvie Road and 88 Avenue
- Hornby Barn (c.1912), 8976 187 Street
- House (c.1930s), 9367 180 Street
- Beaton's Store and Shell Station (1929), 9558 168 Street
- Ashton's Store and Shell Station (1929), 8782 Harvie Road
- Walkington House (1907-1908), 9148 189 Street



2.2 NATURAL HERITAGE FEATURES

There are many natural features located through the area that have been identified as part of the environmental assessment, which will be assessed separately as part of the planning process. Part of the conservation of the character of the area will involve the sensitive integration of new development within the existing landscape context, however it must be recognized that the rural nature of the area will change over time.

However, consideration should be given to the preservation of a number of specific cultural landscape features with heritage value, as listed below. A number of individual trees have been listed on the City's List of Significant Trees, which is separately maintained by the Planning and Development Department; these trees are identified in "Schedule B" of the Tree Preservation Bylaw. If the Significant Tree is on city lands, it is maintained by the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department. If it is on a private property, the owner is responsible for its maintenance.

Natural Heritage Features in the Study Area

- Port Kells Community Hall (4 Douglas Fir)
- Port Kells Library (1 Douglas Fir)
- Port Kells Elementary School (3 Douglas Fir)
- 188 Street Trees (12 Sugar Maples)
- Significant Tree Site 59: Various trees at Old Anniedale School, 9744-176 Street
- Significant Tree Site 200: Memorial Tree, 184 Street and Highway #1

Natural Heritage Features Adjacent to the Study Area

- Cypress Tree, Robertson Nursery, 168 Street
- Significant Tree Sites 132-135: St. Oswald's Church Street Trees (Heritage Register)
- Port Kells Park (35 significant trees listed)
- Significant Tree Sites 182-3: Sitka Spruce in Tynehead Regional Park

2.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Prior to European settlement, there was First Nations settlement in this area. The swampy lowlands to the north of the area were a hunting location for beaver and bear, and there is high likelihood that associated camps were located on the higher ground to the south. The area was also likely a travel route to the Fraser River, and was used by the Katzie and possibly other groups. The Serpentine River watershed is asserted traditional aboriginal territory claimed by the Semiahmoo First Nation.

There are several identified archaeological sites located at the periphery of the area. It has been noted that this area, especially the higher flats above the Serpentine River, may yield further evidence of pre-Contact occupation. In addition, a post-Contact Katzie cemetery is apparently located at the current intersection of 189 Street and Highway #1, which could be affected by any plans to reconfigure the highway interchanges.

This issue will require further assessment to determine probability of other archaeological potential.

2.4 HISTORIC SITES

Two historic mill sites have been located within the area. Although no physical remains are evident from these mills, their locations are significant as they helped determined the early settlement patterns. These sites should be clearly identified and interpreted.



3. HERITAGE CONSERVATION OPTIONS

The redevelopment of the South Port Kells area will constitute a major change to the built heritage and historical low density of the area. In order to maintain a sense of context within the restoration and revitalization of the historic structures, a programme of conservation, commemoration, documentation and interpretation should be considered in conjunction with the buildings being preserved.

This can include one or more of the following options:

- Establishment of one or more heritage areas;
- Conservation of select pockets of South Port Kells heritage sites, which may include selective site acquisition;
- Enhanced educational awareness including commemorative signage; and
- Mandating archival documentation as a development requirement.

The establishment of one or more conservation areas may allow for a part of the context of South Port Kells to be maintained and allow for new development to grow around it. This could constitute an existing cluster of resources, or an area for the relocation of buildings and the incorporation of landscape and contextual features. This could logically be established in the area around the original centre of the Port Kells community. Buildings to be retained need not necessarily be used in their original manner and may be candidates for adaptive reuse as commercial or office space. In addition, the area centred on Tynehead Community Hall contains a node of resources that could also be identified and protected.

3.1 HERITAGE INCENTIVES

Conservation of the character of South Port Kells need not be exclusively a function of the City of Surrey. Conservation can be encouraged in the redevelopment of the area by offering incentives to developers who acquire the recognized heritage assets of the area. In order to conserve heritage, incentives can be applied to new or heritage buildings in exchange for a high level of restoration and/or conservation. The level of incentive offered should be commensurate with the level of heritage conservation that is negotiated.

Existing heritage incentives include funding currently provided to designated sites (\$3,000 per year to a maximum of \$9,000 per site). In addition, the City has previously negotiated Heritage Revitalization Agreements to conserve other sites in the City, a technique that could be very useful in this area.

New incentives could include an amenity contribution from developers (such as in the Cloverdale Neighbourhood Plan) that would be dedicated to heritage conservation purposes. It would be essential that this fund be dedicated specific to heritage, and that it would be allocated in consultation with the City's Heritage Commission.

3.2 REGULATIONS

The City can enact numerous regulations that would protect these identified heritage resources, however regulation in itself would not achieve conservation, given the conflict between conservation and the higher densities and redevelopment proposed for the area. Therefore regulations should be carefully chosen that will assist conservation within an appropriate context, e.g. a modest heritage conservation area that recognizes a cluster of resources of high heritage value. Regulations should always be coupled with incentives for maximum effectiveness.

3.3 RELOCATION

For many of the identified buildings, retention at their existing location is problematic. Proposed road widening, new higher proposed densities, and rationalization of site development puts the buildings firmly at risk. Relocation is an option to demolition, especially given the modest size of the resources. If relocation is being considered, then it should represent a meaningful recreation of context as well as a salvage of the building itself. To be meaningful from a conservation and interpretation standpoint, relocation should therefore be considered within the greater issue of site context.

It will also be necessary to consider the context of the receiving site. Will the building be relocated to an area of older buildings (a precinct) or will another isolated site be appropriate? There may be opportunities to enhance an existing cluster of buildings by relocating one or more additional structures within the vicinity.

3.4 COMMEMORATION

Commemorative actions may be employed to help remember the greater historic context. Signage and passive interpretation will increase the understanding of the area's history and contribute to education of the public about Surrey's communities. Interpretation can be used for both existing and demolished structures as well as for landscapes, plantings, outbuildings and other significant features of the area. Heritage resources of lesser value can be archivally documented for future research and educational purposes.

Documentation of sites that will be lost should be undertaken to archival standards so that research information is available in perpetuity. Although archival standards should be used, the degree of documentation may vary depending on the determined value of the heritage site. Because the inventoried sites have been evaluated in terms of high, moderate or modest significance, options for commemoration should be created for each category.

- Heritage Register sites should receive the greatest level of documentation whether they are conserved or not. Documentation for all highly valued sites should include photographs with measurements, as built or as found drawings and plans and commemorative plaques either at the extant building or the site of the demolished building.
- Other sites of heritage value could have the same requirements, but the level of documentation would be at the discretion of the Planning Department. Photography with measurements and a written record would, however, be likely minimum requirements.

In all cases, the value of a site may increase or decrease as information arises in the future. Levels of commemoration should change in accordance with the change in assessed value of a heritage site. As sites increase in heritage value it is important that they are more thoroughly documented for commemoration.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 GENERAL PLANNING ACTIONS

1. Continue to monitor identified sites (flag on municipal database)
2. Negotiate with owners of identified sites
3. Identify appropriate regulatory tools and conservation incentives
4. Identify standard levels for:
 - a. archival documentation
 - b. commemoration
5. Assess on a regular basis how many resources have been conserved or demolished
6. Interpret the history of the area within the context of ongoing redevelopment

4.2 GENERAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION ACTIONS

1. **Sites of Primary Heritage Value (Heritage Register Sites)**
 - These sites should be targetted for retention within the context of redevelopment
 - Offer highest level of conservation effort
 - Offer greatest level of incentives to achieve conservation
 - Retain in original location if possible
 - Retain site context if possible
 - Consider regulation if negotiations fail
 - Commemorate and documentation for all sites

2. Other Sites of Heritage Value

- Moderate level of conservation effort
- Offer incentives for conservation when appropriate
- Consider relocation to achieve conservation
- Retain site context if possible
- Commemorate when appropriate
- Document when appropriate

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation One: Conserve Two Heritage Precincts

Concentrate heritage conservation activity in two areas: the old centre of Port Kells, where there is the greatest concentration of identified resources; and the area surrounding Tynehead Community Hall. Develop Heritage Conservation Area controls with special design guidelines.

Recommendation Two: Protect Heritage Register Sites

The most crucial sites for conservation have been identified through the Heritage Register evaluation process. All sites on the Heritage Register should be targeted for legal protection such as heritage designation, Heritage Revitalization Agreements or within a Heritage Conservation Area. Natural heritage sites, including Significant Trees, should also be targeted for protection.

Recommendation Three: Preserve Other Sites of Heritage Value

For other identified sites, preservation could be achieved through negotiated agreements such as Heritage Revitalization Agreements, that allow development flexibility by varying subdivision requirements and allow existing heritage sites to be preserved. The Heritage Advisory Commission and the Planning and Development Department should work together to develop guidelines and processes for the identification, preservation and recognition of potential heritage sites.

Recommendation Four: Documentation and Commemoration

As some of these modest resources may disappear within the context of new development, they should be documented prior to their loss, and interpreted and commemorated when possible. Documentation of sites that will be lost should be undertaken to archival standards so that research information is available in perpetuity. Although archival standards should be used, the degree of documentation may vary depending on the determined value of the heritage site. Sites of high heritage value should receive the greatest level of documentation whether they are conserved or not. Documentation for highly valued sites should include photographs with measurements, as built or as found drawings and plans and commemorative plaques either at the extant building or the site of the demolished building. Photography with measurements and a written record should, however, be minimum requirements.

Recommendation Five: Heritage Interpretation

The history of the area can be celebrated in a number of ways, which may include:

- Interpretation of First Nations history, based on ongoing consultation and further archaeology and research
- Re-enforcement of historic neighbourhood boundaries
- Re-introduction of historic street names
- Use of pioneers family names whenever possible

Recommendation Six: Further Identification of Natural Heritage Features

Further identification should be undertaken of potentially significant natural heritage features. This should occur prior to development of individual sites. In addition, there will be impacts throughout the area from road widening and the construction of service roads; whenever possible significant trees and plantings should be identified prior to this work being started. Although not all natural features will be maintained, potential resources should be identified, and consideration given during development to integrate them into the planning process with the goal of identifying challenges and options for preservation. There should be an integrated approach to the preservation of these features once they have been identified.

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