

Address: 1120 Faithful Street

Description of historic place:

1120 Faithful Street is a wood frame two-storey “severely” symmetrical Georgian Revival residence located in the southwestern quadrant of Victoria’s Fairfield neighbourhood. The interior is also designated.

Heritage value:

The historic place, built in 1912, is valued for its architecture, its architect, its original owner, and what it says about housing for the growing merchant class during the building boom in pre-World War I Victoria.

1120 Faithful Street is valued as probably the best example of the Edwardian Classical Revival style in Victoria. The style, characterized by the revival of classical details such as applied columns, prominent cornices and entablatures, was monumental and imposing and so was popular with institutions such as banks and courthouses. Its setting in mature landscaped grounds adds to the monumentality of the structure. The separate garage was constructed at the same time as the house and is also a valued asset. A scroll wire fence with matching gate reinforces the architecture of the dwelling.

There is heritage value in the architect Francis Mawson Rattenbury. Rattenbury was born in 1867 in Leeds, England, he arrived in Vancouver in 1891. He secured the commission for Legislative Buildings in Victoria soon after his arrival and also worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway as their Western Division Architect. His most well-known work for the CPR was the Empress, a Chateau-style hotel built in 1904-1908 in Victoria, with two wings added in 1909-1914. The architect, however, fell out with the CPR and went to work for their competition, the Grand Trunk Pacific Railroad. He designed many hotels and stations for the G. T. P., but they were never completed due to the death of the owner, Charles Melville Hays, in the sinking of the R. M. S. Titanic and the company’s subsequent bankruptcy. The CPR allowed him to return, however, and he built the second CPR Steamship Terminal in Victoria in 1923-1924 in association with another architect, Percy James. Rattenbury and James also collaborated in the design of the Crystal Garden at the same time, although they later had a public conflict over Rattenbury’s refusal to give James credit and payment for his work on the Garden. Given Rattenbury’s emphasis on commercial and institutional commissions, his residential work is rare and is thus highly valued.

The home was built for Robert Lettice, a principal of Lettice and Sears, a painting and decorating firm. Together with his partner, Joseph Sears, Lettice designed and executed the interiors of many well known Victoria buildings, including Metropolitan United Church on Pandora Avenue, the Weiler Building on Government Street, and Victoria’s City Hall. The partnership later became the Melrose Paint Company. The home continues in the ownership of the Lettice family.

Character-defining elements:

The heritage character of 1120 Faithful Street is defined by the following elements:

- characteristics of the Edwardian Classical style including classical portico entrance, narrow siding, ballustraded canopy, bracketed eaves with dentils, central dormer, hipped roof, leaded casement windows on the upper level,
- centered on lot
- set back from street
- garage
- scroll wire fence and gate



1120 Faithful Street, south elevation, 2007