

PENTRELEW: A TRAGIC DOUBLE LOSS; A HERITAGE SITE OF A HISTORIC FAMILY AND A MAJOR CARBON SINK

The site at 1201 Fort St. is a perfect example of what should be saved as a notable heritage site going back to the time of the Fort and environmentally as a large carbon sink with huge historic trees.

A dense development is to remove 29 major trees, including redwood. Garry Oak and 2 added huge sequoias, This loss of trees is scheduled for February.

HONOURABLE HENRY GRAHAM ALSTON 1(832-1872) first owner of this estate.

- Born in Cambridge England and became the Registrar of Titles in 1861 for the Vancouver Island colony of British Columbia
- Later served as the first Attorney -General at the time of confederation.
- Published *A Handbook to British Columbia and Vancouver Island* with map (1850s -70)
- Married twice and lived in Broome Cottage.

Sir HENRY PERING PELLOW CREASE (1823-1905)

- He came to early Victoria in 1858 as a lawyer and went on to become a provincial politician office holder, and judge. He was the first attorney-general first of the mainland colony and then of the two colonies, mainland and Vancouver Island united in 1866.
- He had the task of adjusting BC laws from 1861 to 1870, then a judge in 1870 and knighted in (1896).
- He and his wife Sarah (1826 - 1922) were skilled at art and Sarah's paintings show early streets
- Later she helped found the Jubilee Hospital and The Island Arts and Crafts Society.
- After living in New Westminster, the family took Alston's house and added onto it..
- After a fire, Henry Crease commissioned Wright and Saunders, the first major architect in Victoria, to build a large Italianate house for entertaining relatives, friends and Victoria society.
- Further additions made 11 bedrooms and 2 kitchens with a 60 foot long south-facing verandah.
- The Crease family had great interest in planting speciality trees.
- Sarah died in 1922, with three surviving children and the unmarried children lived there.

THE TRUTH CENTRE TIME

- The Truth Centre Church bought the house in 1947.
- The house and garden survived together until the 1980s, when the Truth Centre group wanted to build their own church.
- Their founder Mrs. Smillie died, so her group wanted even more to fulfill her dream,
- They gave Victoria Council, the choice of keeping the house and cluttering the lot with new buildings or allowing a West Coast style new church building and keeping the garden, (I was a witness who wrote an account in the neighbourhood newspaper.)
- Ironically, Council made their decision on the second choice, partly because they thought that the modern stucco on the building would be hard to remove. However, at the first attempt, the stucco was found to be on wire mesh, easy to remove with all parts intact underneath.
- The new main part., with a front veranda and The Golden Keys, building at the back, was on the house site, so at least we had the garden areas and the original trees.
- An apparent struggle ensued as to who would hold the site. One group won and, sold
- I was told that there was a covenant on the property to prevent a sale.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES;

- When trees are cut down, their carbon comes out to add to what we have now.
- When trees are removed, the earth warms and a wide swath of damage goes to trees all around,
- The trees left start to die and here would be subjected to the large amount of blasting.