

603-607 Pandora Avenue – Hotel Westholme

Statement of Significance

Description

The Hotel Westholme is a four-storey hotel and commercial building, located near the corner of Pandora Avenue and Government Street in the historic Old Town area of downtown Victoria. The main façade is clad in white glazed brick with concrete sills and lintels. It is characterized by its Chicago School architecture, featuring five structural bays delineated by vertical pilasters.

Heritage Value of the Historic Place

The Hotel Westholme is valued for its contribution to the streetscape of Victoria's Old Town District. Constructed in 1910, this commercial building is representative of the great Edwardian-era economic boom that occurred in Victoria between 1906 and 1912. Buildings completed during this time were characterized by larger floorplates than their predecessors, and the preferred aesthetic of the Chicago School of architecture. The Hotel Westholme was commissioned by the Westholme Lumber Company, a local landowning, building, and development company, and originally contained hotel rooms, retail stores, and office space. It illustrates the diversification of commercial enterprises that were established as the City's economic focus shifted to tourism-based commerce supported by the nearby E&N (Esquimalt and Nanaimo) Railway and the commencement of Canadian Pacific Railway steamship service to Victoria in 1901.

The Hotel Westholme is valued additionally for its association with architect Henry Sandham Griffith (1865-1943). Griffith arrived in Canada from his native England in 1887, moving first to Winnipeg, then Saskatoon, and finally settling in Victoria in 1907. By 1910, Griffith was maintaining successful architectural offices in both Victoria and Vancouver, and was responsible for many impressive buildings in both cities and throughout the province.

Character-Defining Elements

The character-defining elements of the Hotel Westholme include its:

- location on Government Street, near the corner of Pandora Avenue in Downtown Victoria
- elements of its original 1910 design, which relate to the Chicago School of Architecture, including the symmetrical design of the front façade with five structural bays delineated by vertical pilasters
- surviving exterior and interior design elements that address its multi-faceted original functions, which included a hotel, retail spaces and office space.