

**1125 Fort**  
**Date: 1909**



*Photo: J.N.Barr, 2008.*



*Hallmark Society photo, n.d.*



*Nick Russell photo, 2008*

### **Statement of Significance**

#### **Description of Historic Place**

1125 Fort Street is a 1½-storey wood-frame house with bellcast tower adjacent to the important intersection of Fort St (the original trail to Cadboro Bay) and Cook St., and within comfortable walking distance of Downtown. It marks the transition area between the eastern edge of Downtown Victoria and the foot of Rockland hill.

#### **Heritage Value:**

1125 Fort Street, designed and built in 1909 for \$3,100, is the centerpiece of a three-house cluster of cross-gabled, Edwardian-style homes. This unusual house serves as the anchor for the group, with its neighbours (1121 & 1127) continuing the front-facing gable theme, with matching front façades.

1125 Fort Street is particularly remarkable for the way in which its compact bellcast Queen Anne tower in the "witch's hat" tradition is tied tightly to the main structure. On the right side of the front façade, balancing the corner tower, is a front-facing entry porch with square pillars. The asymmetrical design is unified by an elaborate belt course with dentils. It is also noteworthy that this house was built close to the intersection with Cook Street at the same time that streetcar service was established there.

The house is an important example of the work of D. H. Bale, who moved from Ontario and Vancouver to Victoria in 1898. In a career spanning some 40 years, he made a significant impact on the Victoria landscape, building several dozen homes as a self-described architect, builder and contractor.

Owner and music teacher Ben Bantly is representative of the influx of entrepreneurial European immigrants who were attracted to the new colony in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and who went on to develop successful business and cultural traditions. Ben was the son of Marcus and Anna Bantly who arrived from Germany via California in 1883. Marcus Bantly established a cigar- factory on Fort Street. The family formed a popular local dance band, and they became leading musicians in the Victoria cultural community. Creation of a "Bantly compound" in the transition area between the city and the gentrified Rockland area indicates the success and the confidence of an immigrant family which played a major role in Victoria, both in the manufacture of cigars and the making of music. This is further exemplified by the addition of a music studio to the house in 1914.

#### **Character-defining Elements:**

The character-defining elements of 1125 Fort Street include elements of the Edwardian style but are not limited to the following:

- Cross-gabled plan;
- Turned finials on gables and tower;
- Wide, pointed bargeboards;
- Fenestration with multi-pane-over-one sashes;
- Leaded windows on the upper floor;
- Double drop-siding overall;
- Elaborate belt-course with dentils.

Queen Ann elements include but are not limited to:

- Short, bellcast, octagonal tower.

Further distinctive elements include:

- Corbelled chimney;
- Rear porch with square column, matching front porch;
- Cantilevered shallow box-bay on side.