



## Planning and Land Use Committee Report

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**Date:** January 22, 2014

**From:** Steve Barber, Senior Heritage Planner

**Subject:** **43 Lewis Street**  
**Heritage Designation Application #000139**  
Request for Heritage Designation by the owner  
Zoned: R-2 Two Family Dwelling District

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### Executive Summary

This is an owner request to designate an existing one storey, English Arts and Crafts bungalow, located on Lewis Street in the James Bay neighbourhood, as a Municipal Heritage Site. The house was built in 1928 and contributes to the historic character of Lewis Street, a small dead-end street with an intact historic streetscape of houses of a variety of styles, built at the beginning of the twentieth century. Few examples of the modest English Arts and Crafts style are protected by heritage designation in Victoria.

The application was reviewed by the Heritage Advisory Panel at its January 14, 2014 meeting and was recommended for approval.

### Recommendations

That Heritage Designation Application #000139 for 43 Lewis Street proceed for consideration at a Public Hearing and that City staff prepare the Heritage Designation Bylaw to designate the property as a Municipal Heritage Site.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Barber".

Steve Barber  
Senior Heritage Planner  
Community Planning Division

Att.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deb Day".

Deb Day  
Director  
Sustainable Planning and Community  
Development Department

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jocelyn Jenkyns".

Jocelyn Jenkyns

SB/ljm

## **1.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to describe the heritage significance of the house at 39 Lewis Street which the owner has requested be considered for heritage designation as a Municipal Heritage Site. This report fulfills the requirements of Section 968(5) of the *Local Government Act*.

## **2.0 Background**

An application for heritage designation from the owner was received on December 2, 2013. It was reviewed by the Heritage Advisory Panel at its January 14, 2014 meeting and was recommended for approval.

## **3.0 Issues**

The issue is the voluntary heritage protection of a heritage building that is not on the Heritage Register.

## **4.0 Analysis**

### **Statement of Significance**

#### **Description**

The historic place is a one storey, English Arts and Crafts style bungalow, built in 1928, located in the James Bay neighbourhood of Victoria, BC.

#### **Heritage Value**

This house contributes to the historic character of Lewis Street, a small dead-end street in the James Bay neighbourhood with an intact historic streetscape of houses of a variety of styles, built at the beginning of the twentieth century. The street is narrow with no sidewalks, and the proximity of the houses to the street creates a small, intimate urban scale which recalls the early years of the development of Victoria as a city. James Bay is significant as Victoria's oldest residential neighbourhood, and illustrates the early pattern of neighbourhood settlement as pioneer farms were subdivided to form the first suburbs. The close proximity and compact nature of this unusually intact historic streetscape offers a window into what a typical James Bay street might have looked like prior to the Second World War. Built in 1928 by John and George Playfair, and their cousin, George Cramer, local builders, the house at 43 Lewis Street illustrates the English Arts and Crafts style, which was a common style in Victoria during the 1920s and 1930s. The house is valued as a representative example of the modest working class homes which sprang up due to the close walking distance to the industrial activity around Ogden Point which was fueled by the economic boom prior to World War One.

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

All elements of the English Arts and Crafts bungalow style including, but not limited to:

- Simple one storey form
- Hipped roof, open soffit and exposed rafters

- Stucco finish
- Three over one wood sash windows
- Cantilevered box bay windows
- Corbelled chimney.

### **Official Community Plan/Neighbourhood Plans**

The conservation of this building is consistent with Chapter 8, "Placemaking (Urban Design and Heritage)" of the *Official Community Plan 2012* which states:

#### City Form

- 8.6 *Conserve and enhance the heritage value, character and special features of areas, districts, streetscapes, cultural landscapes and individual properties throughout the city.*
- 8.11 *Determine the heritage value of areas, districts, streetscapes, cultural landscape and individual properties using the Victoria Heritage Thematic Framework as identified in Figure 12.*

#### Streetscapes and Open Space

- 8.51 *Continue to give consideration to tools available under legislation to protect or conserve heritage property including, but not limited to: heritage designation bylaws; listing on the heritage register; temporary protection; heritage alteration permits; heritage revitalization agreements; design guidelines; and, the protection of views of heritage landmark buildings from public vantage points as identified in Map 8, and to be determined in future local area plans.*
- 8.54 *Continue to work with senior government, community and business partners to identify, protect and conserve property of heritage value.*

The preservation of this building is consistent with the *James Bay Neighbourhood Plan* policies which state:

#### Objectives

1. *Encourage the conservation and rehabilitation of buildings, lands and structures of heritage significance which contribute to the neighbourhood's attractive character.*
2. *Promote positive public awareness of the value of heritage resources.*
3. *Encourage retention of clusters of heritage houses, including streetscapes.*

### **Zoning/Land Use**

The proposed designation is consistent with the policies for neighbourhood conservation and maintains the residential land use.

### **Condition/Economic Viability**

The building appears to be in good condition.

### **Need for Financial Support**

The owner may apply for the Victoria Heritage Foundation House Grant Program.

#### **4.a. Options**

Council can approve or decline the request for heritage designation.

#### **4.b. Resource Impacts**

Financial assistance is provided through the Victoria Heritage Foundation, which receives an annual grant from the City.

#### **4.c. Conclusions**

The heritage designation of this building is justified in view of the significance of the structure as outlined in the Statement of Significance.

### **5.0 Recommendations**

That Heritage Designation Application #000139 for 43 Lewis Street proceed for consideration at a Public Hearing and that City staff prepare the Heritage Designation Bylaw to designate the property as a Municipal Heritage Site.

### **6.0 List of Attachments**

- Map of subject property
- Photos
- Draft description from *This Old House, Volume Two: James Bay*
- Letter from owner, dated December 2, 2013
- *History of Lewis Street: A Historic James Bay Street*, dated December 2, 2013.



43 Lewis Street

Heritage Designation #000139

-  Designated
-  Registered
-  Designation Application Pending





43 Lewis Street

43 Lewis Street





43 Lewis Street





43 Lewis Street

**43 Lewis Street**  
**For: John A. Playfair**

**1928**



43 Lewis St, 2013

VHF / Nick Russell

This bungalow was one of the last of more than a dozen houses built in a cluster on Lewis and Menzies Streets by the Playfair brothers and their cousin George Cramer, between 1912 and 1929.

The building permit for 43 Lewis was issued to John Playfair in 1928, for a 4-room, 1-storey stucco dwelling costing \$2,000.

The simplicity of the box form with hipped roof with a small ridge, the simple porch, and the 3-over-1 casement windows all speak to a style usually referred to as “the 1920s Bungalow.” This is confirmed by the stucco, open soffits with wide eaves, and multi-pane basement windows. All windows are in their original wood frames, and most retain their original glass. The right side of the house is highlighted by two cantilevered box bays with double windows, and a multi-pane piano window. The sympathetic front door is reached via side-facing steps with a stepped solid balustrade.

Some of these elements hint at British Arts & Crafts influences, particularly the open soffits, piano window, a discreet flaring of the original rough stucco, and a modestly corbelled chimney.

The house has much in common with 48 Menzies St, which backs on to it and shares the same lot (east half and west half). Both building permits were issued to John Playfair, exactly a year apart, and for the same estimated price. The Menzies house has the same ridged, hipped roof, and shares the same asymmetrical front fenestration.

This house is important as one of the few intact examples of this style in the area, and because it completes the architectural evolution demonstrated by the Playfair, Playfair & Cramer subdivision, starting with pure Edwardian styles and evolving into the stripped simplicity of the late 1920s.

The earliest house in the area was built in 1876 for commission agent William Charles Robinson and his wife

Hannah. The 10-room Gladys Villa sat on two acres and was originally accessed from Menzies St.

In 1911 the team of Playfair, Playfair & Cramer acquired Gladys Villa and much of Block 15, comprising the north end of Lewis and adjacent lots on Menzies. Since Gladys Villa stood in the middle of what is now the dead-end of Lewis St, it was moved west and re-numbered 66 Lewis. They divided the remainder into 12 lots, systematically constructing one or two houses each year, with a gap during World War I. The houses were all modest, in the \$2-3,000 range, with Arts & Crafts features. Some post-war buildings may have used pre-war plans. Two of the houses, **60 Menzies St** and **53 Lewis St**, are now heritage-designated. Gladys Villa was demolished in 1972 to make way for parking.

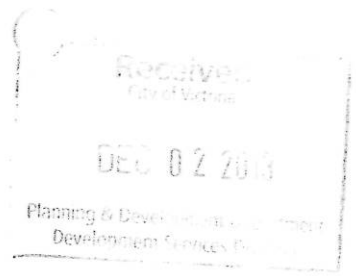
The Playfair brothers John Andrew (b. Lanark Co, ON, 1867-1941) and George William (b. Lanark Co, ON, 1869-1925) and their cousin George Cramer (see 50 and **53 Lewis St**) were responsible for more than 20 houses from about 1910-1929. While their primary emphasis was the Lewis/Menzies Street cluster, they started with houses on Wark, Bay, Taunton, Cambridge & Thurlow Streets (1910-12).

Retired schoolteacher Phoebe Boden (b. ON, 1856-1947) purchased the new house in 1928. Phoebe had taught in Township Uxbridge, ON and by 1911 in Saskatchewan. From 1932-37 she rented the house to the Perkins while she lived in various apartments in the City. She returned to 43 Lewis from 1938-44. By the time of her death at age 90, she was living at the Churchill Hotel on Government St.

Gerald Morton (b. Barbados, BWI, 1898-1983) and Olga Grace (née McDougall, Victoria, BC, 1900-89) Perkins rented the house from 1932-37. When they married in Victoria in 1930, Olga was a stenographer. Gerald worked as an accountant at Beatty Bros, and later at Yarrows shipyard.

From 1945-49 Beatrice Lowe (née Murfin, ENG, 1881-1967) and William Ernest (b. ENG, 1880-1984) Wheeler were the occupants. They arrived in BC from England in 1927 and moved to Victoria c.1938. William was a baker working for Small's, later Arnold's Bakery. He lived to be 103. Their son Ernest (b. Rotherham, ENG, 1908-92) was also living with them and worked as a technician at Young's Radio. By 1950 the Wheelers lived at 3038 Washington St.

In 1951 Thomas Young (b. Blanchory, SCT, 1898-1965) and Blanche (née Robertson, Newmilns, Ayreshire, SCT, 1896-1992) Grant took possession of the house. They arrived in Victoria c.1948 after Thomas retired from 30 years as a police officer in England. By 1953 he was working as a doorman at the Empress Hotel. He was still employed as porter at the Empress at the time of his death in 1965. Blanche remained in the house for several more years until 1975.



Linda Carlson and Davyd McMinn  
43 Lewis Street  
Victoria B.C.  
V8V 2E9

Mayor and Council  
City of Victoria  
1 Centennial Square  
Victoria B.C.

November 20 2013

Dear Mayor and Council

We are writing to you to request that our home at 43 Lewis Street be granted Heritage Designation. The house was built in 1928 and is an example of an English Arts and Crafts bungalow. Although this residential architectural style never matched the popularity of the American Craftsman bungalow on the west coast, there were a number of these small houses built in Victoria during the 1920's and 30's.

43 Lewis is an understated example of the style. The lack of adornment is offset by the clarity of the building's lines and a clear and harmonious structural balance. The house features a symmetrical hip roof, open soffits and exposed rafters. The exterior walls are clad in uninterrupted rough cast stucco with a pronounced flair at the base. The original wood sash casement windows, most with original glass, follow a classic three over one glazing pattern.

The front porch, enclosed since the 1940's, has recently been reopened. The entry staircase, significantly altered in the same period, has been returned to the 1928 configuration. The porch roof is to be restored to its original modified barrel shape. An analysis of the 1928 paint scheme has been completed and the house will be painted in original colours in 2014. An inappropriate 1970s rear addition was

replaced in the 1990s with one that is consistent with the original structure.

In Victoria over the past 50 years many representations of this style of modest bungalow have fallen victim to unsympathetic alterations or outright demolition. 43 Lewis Street, largely unaltered, remains comfortably positioned amongst the eclectic early 20<sup>th</sup> century homes of a historic James Bay street.

We are dedicated to restoring and preserving our 85 year old heritage home for the benefit of ourselves and for the community. We believe that Heritage Designation will greatly assist this enterprise and respectfully request the approval of our application.

Yours Sincerely  
Linda Carlson and Davyd McMinn

*Linda Carlson*  
*Davyd 2*

## Lewis Street

### A Historic James Bay Street

Lewis Street, 1 block long, runs north from Dallas Road with no northerly street exit. The street is narrow and without sidewalks, the lots are small and the houses are situated close to the street. The majority of the houses were built before the Second World War with many dating from the turn of the century to the outbreak of the First War. The variety of styles includes Victorian Vernacular, Edwardian Vernacular Arts and Crafts, Colonial Bungalow, California Bungalow and English Arts and Crafts Bungalow. The close proximity and compact nature of this unusually intact historic streetscape offers a window into what a typical James Bay street might have looked like prior to the Second World War.

The origins of Lewis Street go back to the 1870's. In 1876 William Charles Robinson, an English born wholesaler and customs broker built his home, *Gladys Villa* facing Menzies Street on two acres of land at the north end of present day Lewis Street. Two years later Captain Herbert George Lewis a native of Hertfordshire, employee of the Hudson's Bay Company and skipper of the *Beaver* purchased property on Dallas Road and built a substantial residence at the south end of what is now Lewis Street.

The first tentative route for Lewis Street was decided in 1889 and may have originally been a driveway through the Captain Lewis property. Travelling north from Dallas Road for 30 metres, the street turned east and connected with Menzies Street. In 1904 the easterly section became Brotchie Lane and Lewis Street itself was extended north from Dallas Road to the southern boundary of the *Gladys Villa* estate.

Ten houses were built along Lewis Street before 1911. The residents at that time included four ships captains, two carpenters, a dressmaker, a stores man, an engineer, a labourer and a curiously entitled woman of "own means".

In 1911 two brothers and a cousin from Manitoba purchased *Gladys Villa*. John and George Playfair and George Cramer subdivided the property into 12 lots. Lewis Street was extended north again and the end of the street was connected by a footpath to Menzies Street. Four of the lots fronted on Menzies Street. *Gladys Villa*, now situated in the middle of the subdivision was moved to a new lot on the northwest corner of the property and became 66 Lewis Street.

50 Lewis Street was constructed in 1912 and was the first new house to be constructed in the subdivision. 53 Lewis Street, Heritage Designated in 2011, was the last to be built and was completed in 1929. It was the home of George Cramer, one of the developers. The North Lewis Street subdivision development was interrupted by the economic downturn in 1913 and the onset of First World War. Work resumed again in the 1920's.

The architectural design of most of the 12 houses in the 1911 subdivision reflect the fashion of the period in which they were constructed. Edwardian Vernacular Arts and Crafts before 1914 and English Arts and Crafts during the 1920's. However, the style of the first three houses built after the war harken back to the era before 1914. Each of these three were constructed in 1922 and are located at 44 Lewis and at 60 and 64 Menzies Street. 60 Menzies received Heritage Designation in 2013 and was the home until 1925 of subdivision developer George Playfair.

The Captain Lewis House was demolished in the late 1960's making way for an apartment tower. Two turn of the century homes at the south end of Lewis Street disappeared in the 1980's with the development of the Dunn Elm Village townhouse complex. In the 1970's the working class 1911 cottage at 34 Lewis was bequeathed to the city by its last owner and was removed to make way for Lewis Park which has become a focus for the street and a well used neighbourhood amenity.

The 1913 house at 62 Lewis and the 1876 *Gladys Villa* at 66 Lewis were demolished in the early 1970's in favour of a parking lot for the Albion Court apartment building. In the 1990's two new houses were constructed on subdivided lots at 15 and 27 Lewis Street. Most of the remaining pre Second World War houses retain their original facades and for the most part the feeling of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century Victoria streetscape has been maintained.

Several years ago the neighbourhood marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1911 Lewis Street extension and subdivision. During the event temporary historic informational signs were installed on each property indicating the date the house was built, the first residents name as well as their occupation. In the future we hope to create more permanent versions of these signs. We have also been discussing the possibility of installing a plaque at the end of the street which would outline in text and photos the history of the street and its early residents. Many people, both local and visitor, walk along Lewis Street each year. It is clear from many casual conversations that the historic ambiance of the street is often the reason that they choose this route.

We recognize that the historic flavour of a street can disappear very quickly. Descriptive signage, plaques and photos greatly enhance the experience for a visitor but offer little value if that flavour has been tarnished and the balance tipped by the disappearance of one too many heritage buildings. We trust that in choosing to seek Heritage Designation for our three homes we are beginning the process of helping to protect this small piece of historic James Bay. We also think that as more neighbours join us in the years to come Historic Lewis Street can become a valued community heritage asset preserved for the enrichment of all.