



## Planning and Land Use Committee Report

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**Date:** January 22, 2014

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

**Subject: 50 Lewis Street**  
**Heritage Designation Application #000140**  
Request for Heritage Designation  
Zoned: R-2 Two Family Dwelling District

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### Executive Summary

This is an owner request to designate an existing two storey, Edwardian Vernacular Arts and Crafts style residence and garage, located on Lewis Street in the James Bay neighbourhood, as a Municipal Heritage Site. The house and garage were built in 1912 and contribute 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.

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 #000140 for 50 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,

Handwritten signature of Steve Barber in blue ink.

Steve Barber  
Senior Heritage Planner  
Community Planning Division

Att.

Handwritten signature of Deb Day in blue ink.

Deb Day  
Director  
Sustainable Planning and Community  
Development Department

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

Handwritten signature of Jocelyn Jenkyns in blue ink, written over a horizontal line.

Jocelyn Jenkyns

SB/ljm

## **1.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to describe the heritage significance of the house at 50 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 two storey, Edwardian Vernacular Arts and Crafts style house, built in 1912, located in the James Bay neighbourhood of Victoria, BC.

#### **Heritage Value**

Built in 1912 by local builder George Cramer, the house is an excellent example of the Edwardian Vernacular Arts and Crafts style, which displays the typical features of front facing gable roof with side dormers, recessed porch and angled bay window on the main floor, and art glass in one or more wood sash windows. Mr. Cramer was an active builder with his cousins, John and George Playfair. These local builders were responsible for the construction of more than 20 houses in Victoria from 1910 to 1929. The house at 50 Lewis Street is the oldest survivor and the only example of this style on Lewis Street.

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. 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.



The garage appears to have been constructed at the same time as the house with similar materials including double bevel wood siding, a flattened hipped roof, and original doors of vertical tongue and groove wood siding. A rare surviving example, it is representative of the emerging role of the automobile and its effect on City streetscapes of the period.

### **Character-defining Elements**

All elements of the Edwardian Vernacular Arts and Crafts style including, but not limited to:

#### House

- Gable roof form with side dormers
- Recessed porch and angled bay window on the main floor
- Wood sash windows
- Art glass
- Double bevel wood siding
- Wood shingles and wood trim

#### Garage

- Double bevel wood siding
- Flattened hipped roof
- Original doors of vertical tongue and groove wood siding

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

The conservation of these buildings 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**

Both the house and garage require painting. The garage is missing trim boards and is in serious need of repair.

**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 house and garage is justified in view of the significance of the structures as outlined in the Statement of Significance.

**5.0 Recommendations**

That Heritage Designation Application #000140 for 50 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.





50 Lewis Street

Heritage Designation #000140



- Designated
- Registered
- Designation Application Pending

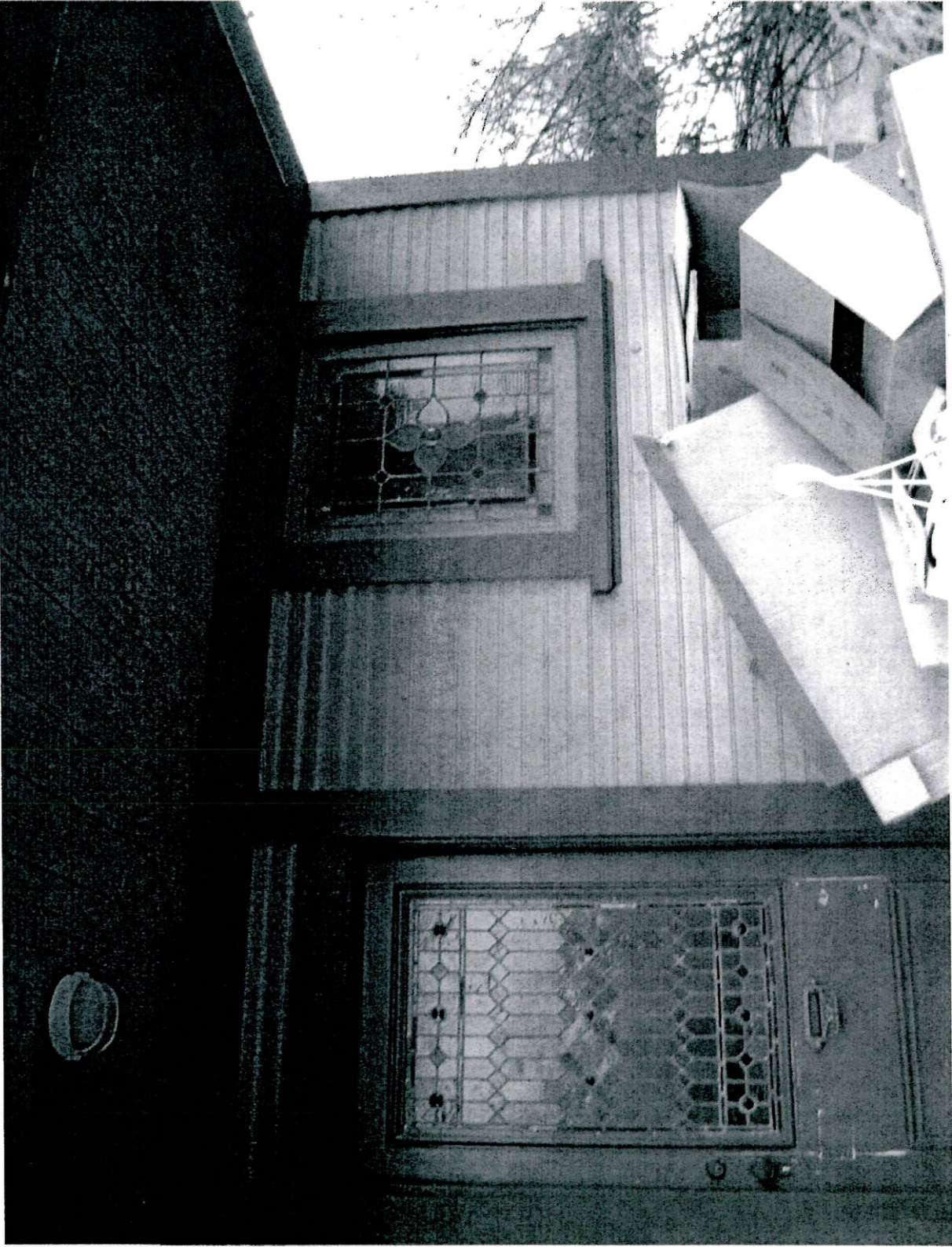






50 Lewis Street





50 Lewis Street



50 Lewis Street

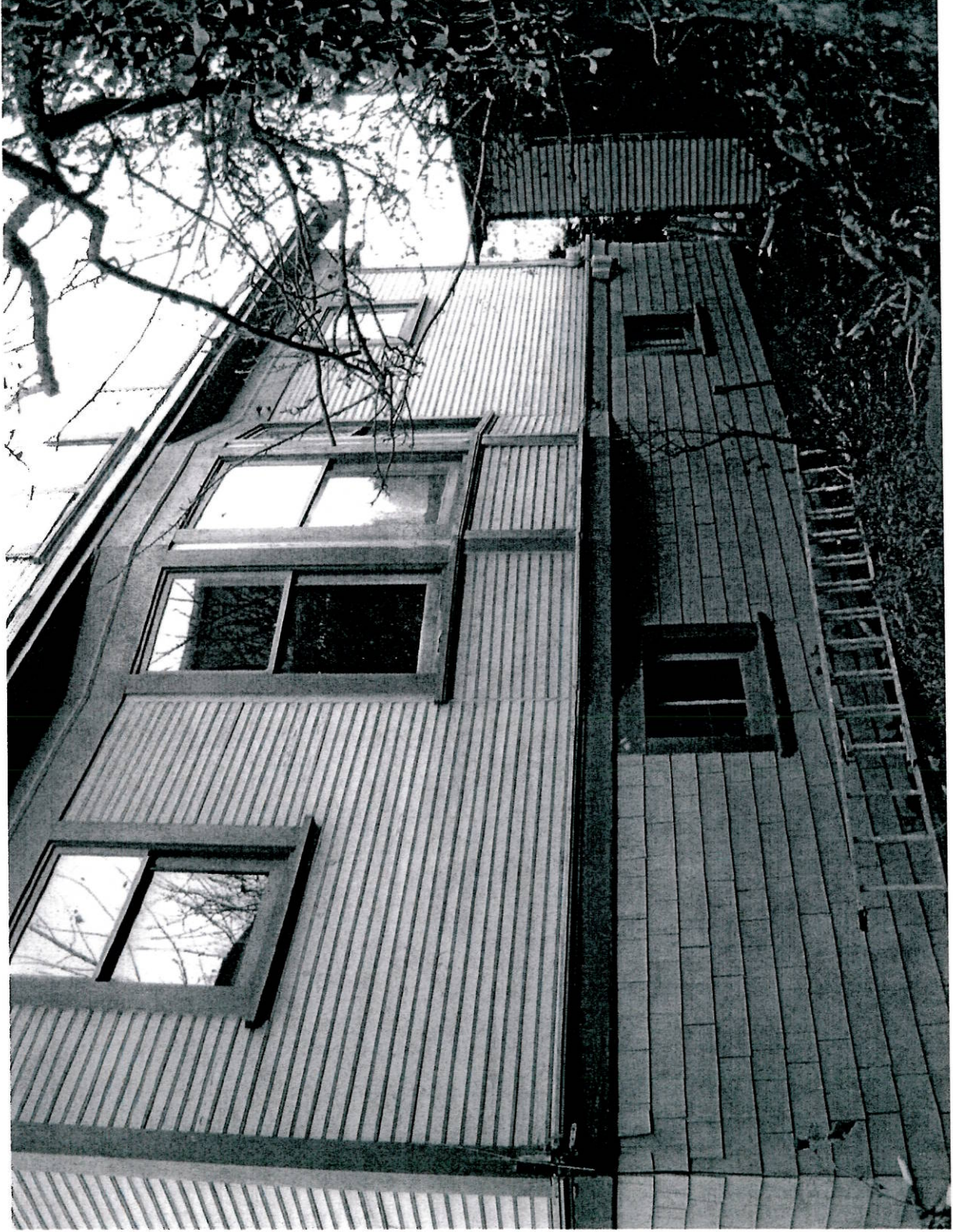






50 Lewis Street





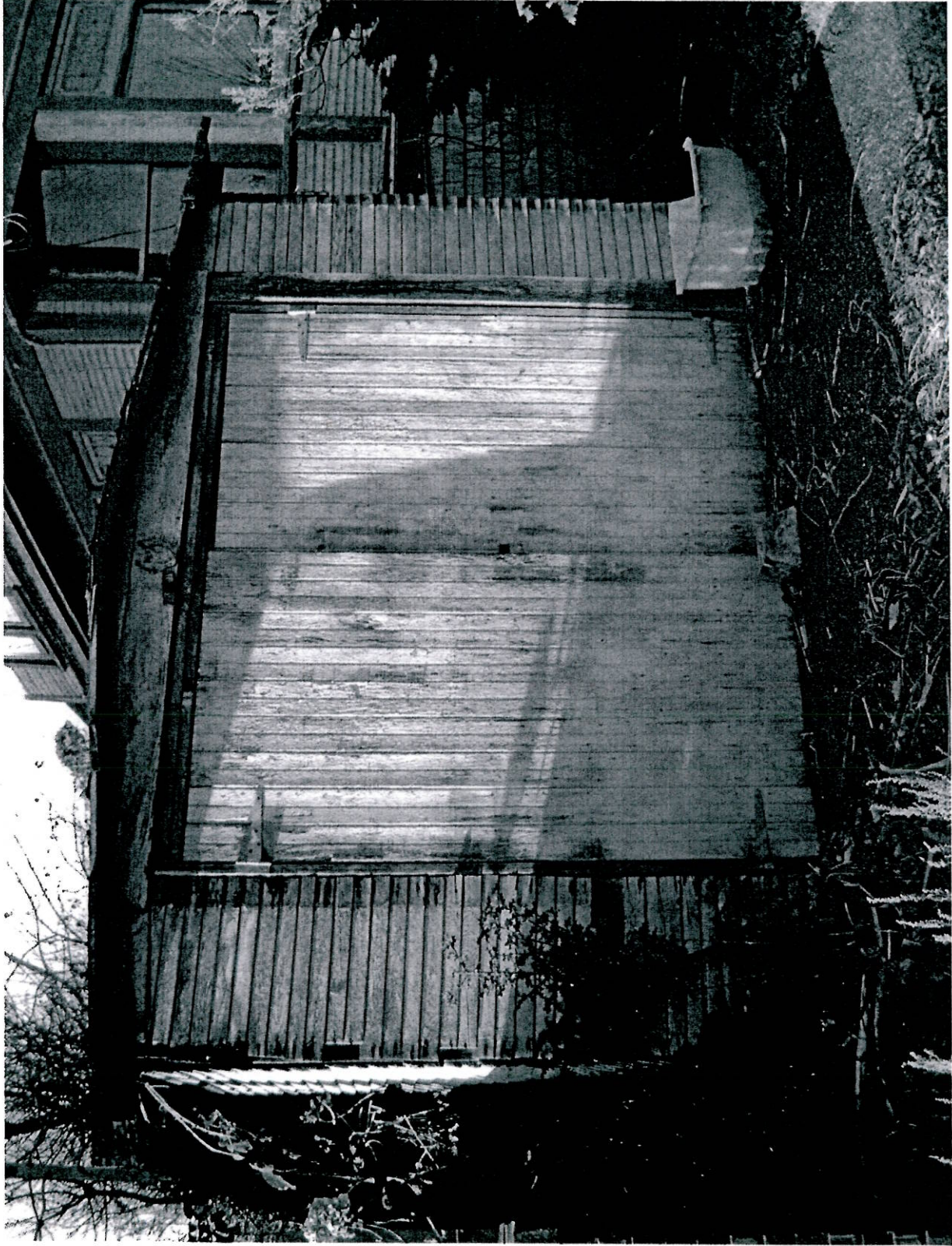
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50 Lewis Street





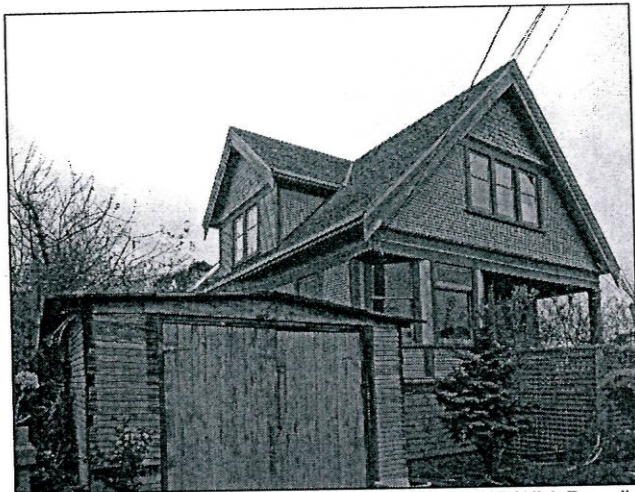


50 Lewis Street - Garage



50 Lewis Street  
For: George W. Cramer

1912



50 Lewis St, 2013

VHF / Nick Russell

This house is a fine example of the Edwardian Vernacular style that swept through Victoria in the latter part of the first decade of the 20th Century. The style has been attributed to Samuel Maclure, who seems to have introduced it with his house "Glencairne," on Oak Bay Av, in about 1900. That design was praised in the 1905 *Canadian Architect & Builder*, as solving "the small house problem," and local contractors quickly copied it. Typical components of these 1½-storey homes include a front-facing gable with substantial front attic windows and side dormers, over a recessed front porch with one or more columns. They often also include half-timbering in the gable, an angled-bay window on the front, and art-glass in one or more windows. This house includes most of these elements.

The half-width porch is deeply recessed, and accessed by side-facing steps, though a 1970s photograph shows the more usual front-facing steps and a low porch balustrade. The floors are separated by a wide band with narrow astragal moulding. The main and top floors are covered in narrow double-beveled siding, but the gable peak, defined by a simple architrave, has shingles, matching the foundation.

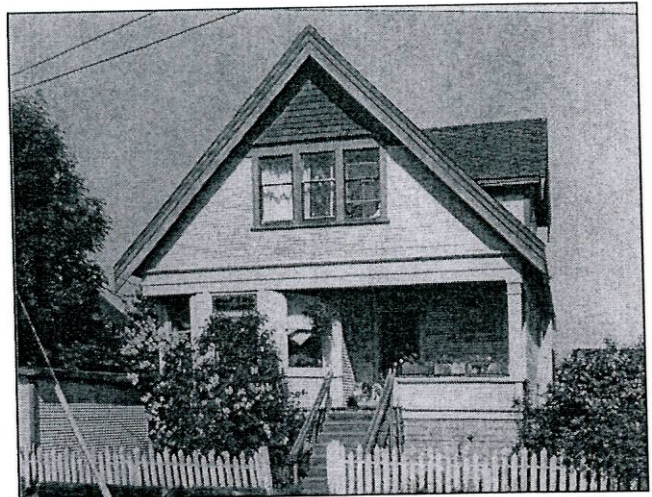
Art-glass in the transom of the front bay, in a porch window and in a left-side piano window contains a matching flower motif. Main-floor windows are 1-over-1 sashes, but the upper front windows are casements.

The left side of the main floor features a shallow angled bay. Both sides have large roof dormers, to increase space and light on the upper floor.

This house is the oldest survivor of the little subdivision created at the north end of Lewis Street (with Menzies) by the partners Playfair, Playfair and Cramer.

George Cramer took out the Building Permit for this address in 1912. The cost was \$2,500 for the six-room

house. Unfortunately, it doesn't specify whether the garage was built at the same time, but no other permit has been found for this address before 1930. The garage is of very simple construction, with flattened hipped roof, open rafters, and double-beveled siding. Paint shadows clearly show missing trim boards that should define the corners and doorframe. The barn-style doors are built of vertical siding.



50 Lewis St, 1971

Hallmark Heritage Society Archives

George William Cramer (b. ON, 1858-1939) was the cousin of brothers John (see 43 Lewis St) and George (60 Menzies St) Playfair. They all arrived in Victoria around 1911 and were responsible for building more than 20 houses from about 1910-29. The Playfairs and Cramer were descendants of a large, prominent family that founded the village of Playfair Mills, not far from Perth, ON c.1817. In 1880 a branch of the family settled in Baldur, MB where they were farmers and house builders. By 1895 Cramer and George Playfair had established a cattle ranch in the McLeod District of Alberta, although they continued to live in Manitoba. George Cramer married Martha Orilla (née Card, Uxbridge, ON, 1864-1944). Around 1910 they moved, with their daughters Pearl and Mary, to Victoria where they lived in a house they built on Wark St. Although George called himself a retired farmer, he was involved in building several more houses including 53 Lewis St.

The house at 50 Lewis was occupied from 1912-17 by George Wallace (b. Middlesex, ENG, 1860-1917) and Adah Florence (née Winnall, London, ENG, 1857-1935) Anthony and their four adult children. They arrived in Victoria c.1910. George was an accountant employed by the Brackman-Ker Milling Co. Son John Cuthbert (b. ENG, 1894-1954) was timekeeper at the Empress Hotel. The others siblings worked for the BC Electric Railway (later BC Hydro). Son Ralph (b. ENG, 1887-1931) was paymaster. He married Isobel Irene Smith of Lytton in 1917 in Vancouver. Ralph committed suicide at the age of 52. Daughters Constance Mary (b. Middlesex, ENG, 1889-

1981) and Winifred (b. Middlesex, ENG, 1890-1981) both worked as office clerks. The sisters died of pneumonia in 1981 within a week of each other when they were living together in Saanichton.

From 1917-38 George William (b. Kent, ENG, 1869-1959) and Ada Marcella (née Copp, Liverpool, ENG, 1880-1943) Brown owned the house. They married in Vancouver in 1909. George had been in Victoria since 1894. He was chief engineer for the federal government's dredge "Ajax," retiring in 1938. He was also Secretary of the National Assoc. of Marine Engineers. Their son William Robert (b. Victoria, BC, 1910-87) apprenticed at Victoria Machinery Depot and was later employed by the BC Coast Steamship Service. He served in the Royal Canadian Navy during WWII. In 1938 the Browns moved across the street to 53 Lewis St (built 1929, also by George Cramer) where they remained until George's death in 1959.

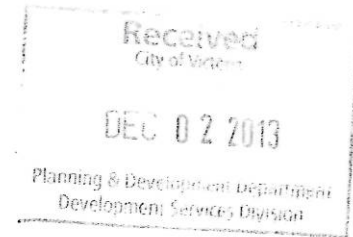
From 1939-67 widow Emily Maud Smith (née Godwin, ENG, 1883-1974) resided here. Emily was a retired schoolteacher. Her husband, Cecil Trice Smith (b. Upton Grey, ENG, 1884-1917), enlisted in the Canadian Infantry in Montreal in 1915. His occupation was given as telephone operator. He was killed in 1917 at the age of 32 and was buried at the Zouave Valley Cemetery, Souchez, France. They had two daughters: Phyllis Maud and Dorothy Alice.

The occupants from 1968-72 were Charles R. and Arlene Gray. Charles was a salesman at the Bay department store.

The current owner has retained the house since 1973.



Don Lindsay  
2830 Somass Drive  
Victoria, BC  
V8R 1R8  
date



Mayor and Council  
City Hall  
1 Centennial Square  
Victoria, BC  
V8W 1P6

Mr. Mayor and Councillors

re: Heritage Designation

I am writing to request heritage designation for my house and the adjacent garage at 50 Lewis Street.

The house was built in 1912, the first house of a 12 dwelling subdivision completed in 1929. Construction of the house appears to have been supervised by George Cramer who, with his cousins, the Playfair brothers, was responsible for the 1911 subdivision of the Gladys Villa property at the north end of Lewis Street. Cramer is on record at City Hall as applying for the sewer connection for #50.

50 Lewis Street is representative of the Edwardian Vernacular Arts and Crafts style which found particular favour in Victoria in the decade before the First World War. It has been suggested that the Victoria version of this style was based upon a 1904 Swiss Chalet style design by Samuel Maclure. Sometimes known as Victoria Specials, many of these middle class homes were built throughout the city, but this is the only one of its type on Lewis Street.

The house conforms to the general standard of the style: a steeply pitched front gable roof, two gabled dormers, a triple sash upper storey window facing the street, double wave siding above the water table and shingles below as well as in the gable façade. Also typical of this style is the inset front entry porch adjacent to a bay window. The house features a leaded art glass transom sash in the bay as well as at two other locations in the house.

The house represents a solid, working class home, with minimal but effective detailing in moldings and trim. The exterior of the house has been little altered in the past 100 years and retains much of its original configuration and architectural detail. The original front door is in storage awaiting restoration.

The adjacent automobile garage, also typical of the period and once a very common adjunct building, is a now rare survivor and unique on the street. I am seeking heritage designation for the garage as well as the house.

The house has significant visual impact on the street because it is adjacent to a large parking lot to the north. This allows the east-facing front facade and the north facade to be read together visually when approached from the the northern end of the street.

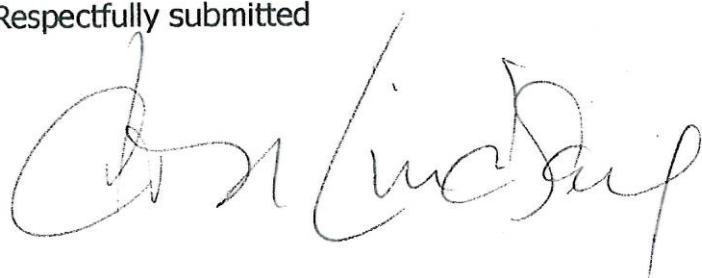
The first owner of the house, George Wallace Anthony, lived with his family at 50 Lewis from 1912 until 1916 when they moved to 136 St. Andrews Street. Anthony was employed as an accountant for the BK Milling Company in 1911 and 1912, and afterwards as a self employed accountant.

The Anthony family appears in 1901 UK Census living in Finchley, London, where George worked as a "secretary to a public company". George Wallace (born London, UK 1860, died Victoria 1917) married Ada Florence (born London 1857, died Victoria 1935). They were accompanied to Victoria by three children, Ralph (born London 1886, died Victoria 1931) Constance Mary (born London 1889, died Victoria 1981) and Winnifred H (born London 1897). All three children were employed in clerical positions at BC Electric Company in Victoria.

After living almost forty years in a house that has just celebrated its centenary, I may be the longest single owner of 50 Lewis Street (purchased 1973). I purchased the house with no particular interest in heritage, but I did recognize 'good bones', the privacy of the back garden versus the compact front yard, and proximity to the waterfront and the downtown. While similar residences on the market at the time suffered from drop ceilings and 60's plumbing, this house had two bay windows and a great entrance hall with a generous stairwell, all flooded with natural light throughout the day. I am seeking designation so that subsequent owners will prize this wonderful house for its architectural heritage, and respect and maintain it.

I am submitting this application for designation as one of a group of neighbours attempting to preserve an example of James Bay before the arrival of multi-floor dwellings (apartments and high rises). This is an opportunity to preserve an ensemble of houses - the beginnings of a precinct.

Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Lindsay". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "C".



Recd  
DEC 07

## 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 deeded 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.