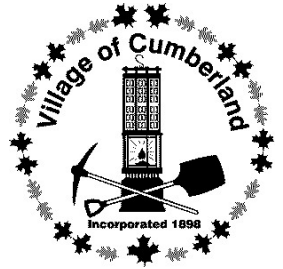


**The Corporation of the Village of Cumberland
Heritage Committee Agenda**



**December 4 at 4:00 p.m.
Masonic Hall, 2687 Dunsmuir Ave, Cumberland**

We are honoured to gather on the unceded traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation.

1. Approval of the Agenda

2. Minutes

Adoption of Minutes of October 16, 2025

3. Unfinished Business

None

4. New Business

4.1 Council Referral HAP 2502 – 2687 Penrith Ave, the Abbey Studio

4.2 Statement of Significance for the Abbey Studio and Cumberland Electrical Light Co. Hydro Plant Remnants

4.3 Presentation on Heritage Conservation Plan - 3831 Moncton St, Richmond, Stevenston (presentation by Hugh Mclean)

5. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Heritage Committee is scheduled for January 15, 2025 at 4:00pm

6. Adjournment

**The Corporation of the Village of Cumberland
Heritage Committee**



October 16, 2025 at 4:00 p.m.

Masonic Hall, 2687 Dunsmuir Avenue, Cumberland, BC

Members Present: Eric Pattison, Chair
Marianne Bell
Lois Harris
Hugh McLean
Kaili Zevenbergen
Councilor Neil Borecky

Regrets: Meaghan Cursons

Staff: Courtney Simpson, Director of Development and Bylaw Services
Karin Albert, Senior Planner

The chair called the meeting to order at 4:03pm.

1. Approval of Agenda

Moved by: Harris

Seconded by: Borecky

THAT item 4.3 - Committee Workplan be moved to the top of the agenda and the thus amended agenda for October 16, 2025 be approved.

Carried Unanimously

2. Minutes

Moved by: Harris

Seconded by: Borecky

THAT the minutes of the June 19, 2025 meeting be adopted.

Carried Unanimously

3. Unfinished Business

None.

4. New Business

4.1 2026 Committee Workplan

The work plan document includes both a status update of 2024-2025 activities and the proposed Committee workplan for 2025. Committee members provided edits for clarity:

- Work plan item to update the Village’s street naming policy should include heritage as a consideration, otherwise, take out all the specifics, including equity and inclusion, and just leave “process and goals”. The latter includes all of the above.
- Should also look at alley way naming. A few were named, there is opportunity to name others.
 - Staff clarified that would be a separate process. The street naming policy is for new streets named at subdivision.

Moved by: Harris

Seconded by: McLean

THAT the Heritage Committee submit the proposed 2026 work plan to Council for acceptance.

Carried Unanimously

Edited workplan attached to minutes.

4.2 Draft OCP

Discussion

Heritage Policies

- Delete statement under 7.4.1 *Overview* (p. 65 of draft) that Union was left to various ethnic communities. Not correct.

Heritage Conservation Area Guidelines

- Guidelines are a lot clearer. Supporting images are helpful.
- Mixed Use area on north side of Derwent and south side of Penrith, clarify commercial or residential in the preamble as residential buildings may convert to commercial due to the proposed new zoning.
 - Staff clarified, as in current HCA text, no HAP will be required for alterations to existing residential buildings.
- Under *Character-Defining Elements, Residential Buildings* (p. 191) focus on listing the character-defining elements, not a particular architectural style.
- Under *Brief History of Cumberland* (p. 92), delete “leaving Union to the various ethnic communities”
- Under *Objectives* (p. 193) delete “renovation”. That term is not used in heritage conservation. Should read “to promote conservation, preservation and revitalization...”
- Section *E. Exemptions*, #3, change “siding” to “cladding”.

- Section E. Exemption, #10, change to “interior alterations” from “interior renovations”
- Delete guideline (f) under 5. *Form and Character - New Construction* as it duplicates guideline (e) which explains better what “responding to a human scale” means.
- Lois and Marianne will update schedule A: Heritage Buildings, Other Structures... based on walk-by and review of records in *Cumberland Heritage- A Selected History of People, Buildings, Institutions and Sites 1888-1950*.

Maps

- Good to see the inclusion of a map showing Cumberland’s heritage neighbourhoods. Will assist with communication, raising awareness of Cumberland’s heritage and future heritage planning.
- Support the updated HCA area.

4.3 Draft Zoning Bylaw

Staff provided a review of key elements of the proposed new Zoning Bylaw.

Discussion

- What is the basis for the high minimum floor to ceiling height in the MU-1 (the former VCMU-1)? Heritage buildings on Dunsmuir Avenue have varying ceiling heights. There does not seem to be a “heritage” reason.
- Minimum height can be reduced. 11 to 12 ft is comfortable for a commercial space.
- Why is the Beaufort Medical Centre property MU-2, previous zoning was VCMU-1. Previous density permits apartments above commercial uses on remainder of lot.
- Review parking exemption for the Beaufort Medical Clinic lot and Harmonic Arts lots as there is room for parking on both lots.

5. Next Meeting

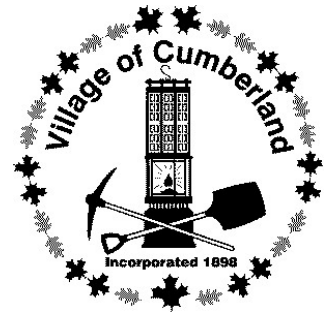
The next meeting of the Heritage Committee is scheduled for Thursday, November 20, 2025 at 4:00 p.m.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05pm.

MEMO

HERITAGE COMMITTEE



REPORT DATE: 10/31/2025
MEETING DATE: 12/4/2025

File: HAP2502

TO: Committee Members
FROM: Jasmeen Kaur Sidhu, Planning Technician
SUBJECT: Request for comment on heritage alteration permit- 2687 Penrith Avenue

Council has referred a heritage alteration permit (HAP2502) for 2687 Penrith Avenue, the Abbey. The Heritage Committee is requested to provide recommendations to Council with respect to the HAP application.

Following is a framework for possible resolutions for convenience:

- i. THAT the Heritage Committee recommend that Council approve the heritage alteration permit (HAP2502) with the following changes:
 - i. list any recommended design changes
- ii. THAT the Heritage Committee recommend that Council (*approve/not approve*) the heritage alteration permit (HAP2502) substantially in compliance with the attached draft permit

ATTACHMENTS

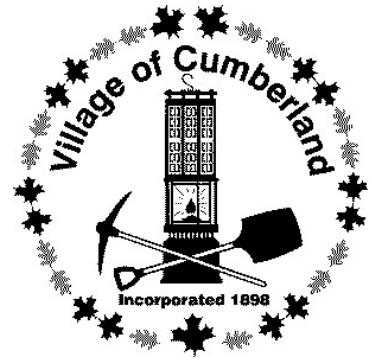
1. November 10, 2025 Council Report

Respectfully submitted,

J.Sidhu

Jasmeen Kaur Sidhu, Planning Technician

COUNCIL REPORT



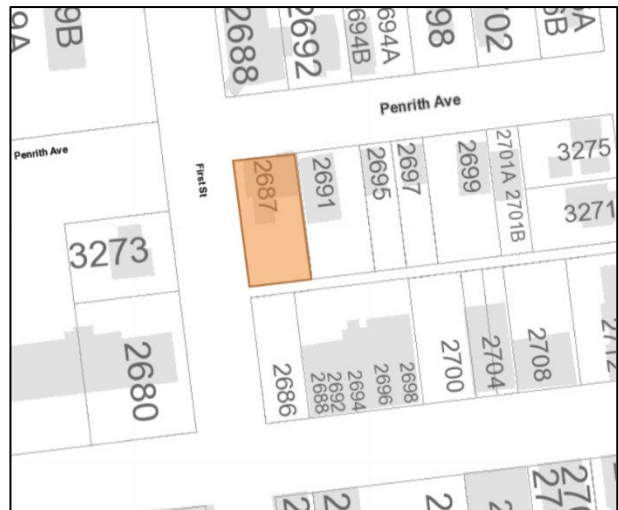
REPORT DATE: October 20, 2025
MEETING DATE: November 10, 2025

File No. HAP2502

TO: Mayor and Councillors
FROM: Jasmeen Kaur Sidhu, Planning Technician
SUBJECT: Heritage Alteration Permit, 2687 Penrith Avenue, for Referral

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council refer the heritage alteration permit (HAP2502) application for the property described as Lot 12, Block 3, District Lot 21, Nelson District, Plan 522 (2687 Penrith Avenue) to the Heritage Committee.



Subject Property

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to request a referral to the Heritage Committee of a heritage alteration permit (HAP) to separate commercial and residential unit entrances and deck areas.

To do so, the applicant requests the following heritage alterations:

- Removal of a portion of the fence and addition of a new wooden gate to create residential access to the rear yard
- Installation of a new portion of the fence, matching the existing fence and a new metal gate to secure residential access at the street frontage
- Installation of a divider to separate the commercial and residential deck space

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

None.

BACKGROUND

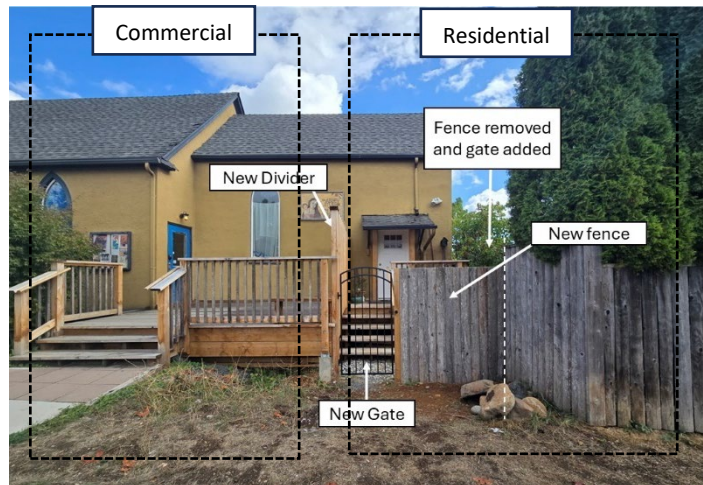
Built in 1895, the Church of St John the Evangelist is a one-storey, wood-framed, front-gabled building with Gothic windows, joined by a side-gabled hall added in 1941. As part of Cumberland's historic "Church Row," it holds both historic and aesthetic value for its Gothic Revival Style, reflected in its pointed windows and steep roof. Following declining church membership, the site

was sold in 1994 and transformed into “The Abbey,” later know as Abbey Studio, a cultural venue for art, music, and film. Since then the owner has continued this legacy while converting the hall into a long-term residence. Over the years, the building has gone through many alterations like addition of storage room and deck. Recently, the deck was renovated (See attachment 2).

Proposed Development

On the side of the building facing First Street, there are two entrances: one for the commercial unit and the other for the residential unit. A shared deck with steps and a ramp provides access to both entrances.

The owner recently completed deck repairs under a building permit. As the deck footprint was proposed to remain unchanged and the permit scope was limited to repairs, a heritage alteration permit was not required at that time. However, during construction the applicant expanded the scope of work by installing a divider on the deck to create two separate deck spaces- one for the commercial unit and one for the residential unit.



Proposed Development

More recently, the applicant removed a portion of the existing fence and installed a new wooden gate in its place to create residential access to the rear yard. In addition, a new fence matching the existing one was added along with a metal gate to secure the residential access and deck area. All these changes required a HAP.

The new additions do not comply with the heritage conservation area (HCA) guidelines. A detailed discussion can be found in the *Analysis* section below.

Official Community Plan

The Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 990, 2014 (OCP) designates the property as Commercial Mixed Use which supports a mix of uses on a single property. The property is also within HCA1- Historic Commercial Core and hence requires a HAP. The HCA is intended to provide long-term protection of the Historic Village Commercial Core (HVCC), which contains resources with special heritage value or heritage character.

The proposed development complies with the OCP designation; however, the additions do not comply with the HCA guidelines. A detailed discussion is found below, under the *Analysis* section.

Zoning Bylaw

As per the Zoning Bylaw No. 1027, 2016 (Zoning Bylaw), the property is zoned as VCMU-1 Village Commercial Mixed-Use Zone. The proposed development is consistent with Zoning Bylaw regulations.

Community Heritage Register

At the time of this application, the property is not on the Community Heritage Register. However, over the past few months, the Village, in collaboration with its Heritage Committee, has prepared a Statement of Significance (SOS) for the property. The SOS is currently pending resolution by the Heritage Committee and subsequent receipt by Council, with both steps expected to be completed in the coming weeks.

Development Application Procedures Bylaw and Heritage Committee

As per Development Application Procedures Bylaw No. 1187, 2023, staff may refer non-delegated HAPs to the Heritage Committee to provide feedback to be incorporated into the comprehensive letter to the applicant. As of the date of this report, the Heritage Committee's terms of reference require a resolution from Council for referral. As such, staff have prepared this preliminary report to obtain the required resolution. Future amendments to the Committee's terms of reference could make this referral automatic, meaning that a Council resolution will not be required.

Once reviewed by the Heritage Committee, staff will compile the Committee's recommendations alongside any other department's recommendations within a comprehensive letter. The contents of the letter would be addressed prior to the application being considered by Village Council for approval and issuance of the HAP.

ANALYSIS

General

While the alterations are relatively minor, they impact the overall visual appearance and character of the building. The general design guidelines in the HCA state that the commercial appearance of a building's street level should not be significantly altered from its original form. The changes introduce a clear visual and spatial separation between the commercial and residential parts of the building. Overall, the alterations primarily support the residential use by dividing shared spaces and enhancing privacy for the residential unit.



Divider, wooden fence and metal gate as installed

Landscaping

The HCA guidelines require that where construction of a new fence is contemplated, owners or designates are encouraged to erect a fence or a wall of historic appearance (e.g., various styles of pickets or stone walls). The newly installed portion of the fence does not comply with this guideline. The new section of the fencing is intended to match the existing non-conforming solid grey fence along the rear yard, creating visual continuity and reinforcing the residential character of the property.



Fence as installed

Historic photographs from 1940 indicate that the property featured a picket fence with substantial posts and a base that appeared to be constructed of stone or brick. (see Schedule A)

The wooden picket gate installed aligns with the HCA guidelines. However, the black metal gate, contrasts with the building's warm tones and the brown colour of the deck railing.



Wooden picket gate and Black metal gate as installed

In response to initial staff feedback regarding the design of the new fence, the applicant has alternatively proposed installing a picket-style fence consistent with the railing design of the renovated deck while retaining the metal gate.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No financial implications are associated with this heritage alteration permit.

OPERATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The review of Heritage Alteration Permit and Development Variance Permit applications are part of the services provided by the Development Services Department.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

No climate change implications are associated with the proposal.

ALTERNATIVES

1. THAT Council issue the heritage alteration permit.

Council may issue the permits without referrals to the Heritage Committee. Because the staff review identifies non-compliance with the HCA guidelines, issuance of the permit is not recommended without some alterations to the design.

2. THAT Council deny the heritage alteration permit.
3. THAT Council request further information or changes related to the heritage alteration permit.

If changes are requested, specific direction about the type of changes will assist the applicant.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

- Diverse & Healthy Community
- Sustainable Service Delivery & Asset Management
- Community Planning

ATTACHMENTS

1. Schedule A- pictures showing deck through the years
2. Statement of Significance
3. Draft Heritage alteration permit

CONCURRENCE

Courtney Simpson, Manager of Development Services **CS**

Respectfully submitted,

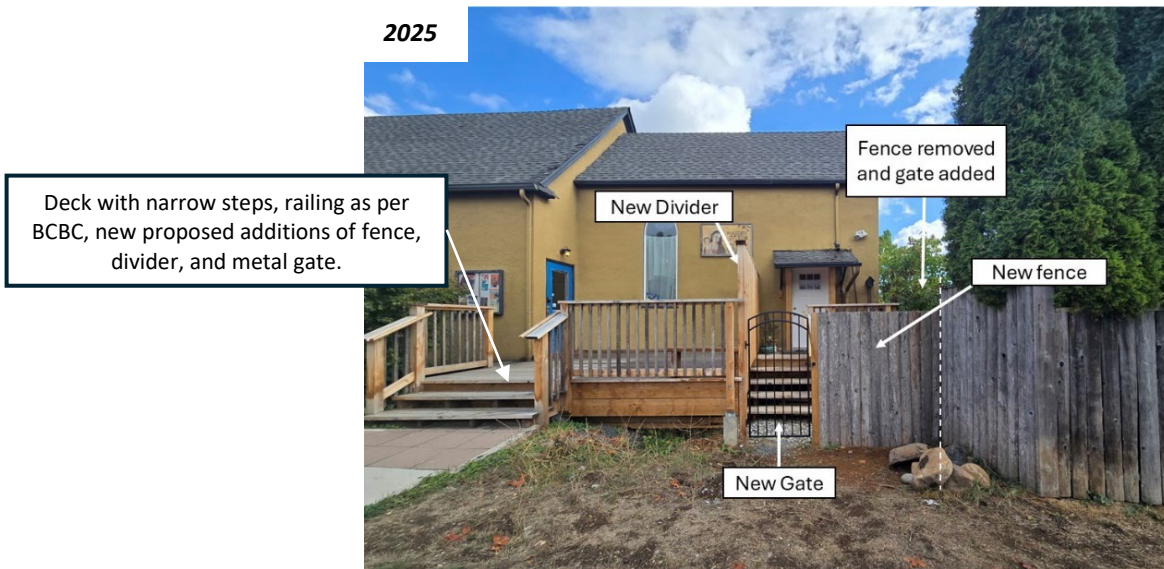
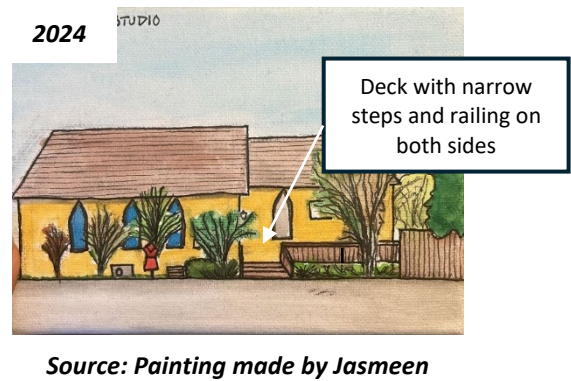
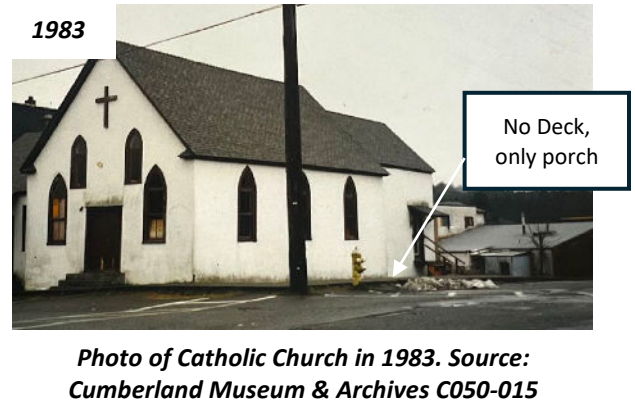
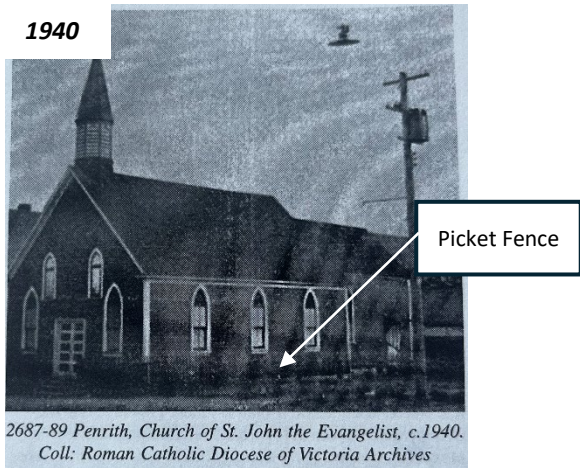
J. Sidhu

Jasmeen Kaur Sidhu
Planning Technician

M. Mason

Michelle Mason
Chief Administrative Officer

Schedule A
Deck over the years-



Statement of Significance

Church of St. John the Evangelist (now the Abbey Studio)
2687-89 Penrith Avenue, Cumberland BC :: 1895, 1911, 1941



July 2025

Description of Historic Place

The Church of St. John the Evangelist, completed in 1895, is a one storey front-gabled building with gothic windows built in two stages: 1895 and 1911. Attached to the east elevation is a one-storey side-gabled hall built in 1941. These wood-framed buildings are located on the corner of Penrith Avenue and First Street in Cumberland, British Columbia.

Heritage Values

Completed and consecrated in 1895, the Church of St. John the Evangelist (now known as the Abbey Studio) has historic value as an important component of Cumberland's 'Church Row' which was established between 1894 and 1895 along Penrith Avenue. Lots were donated to congregations of the community by the mine owners, Union Colliery Co., for the purpose of building churches. Together and individually, these church buildings represent the initial settlement of Union townsite in the 1890s, to be renamed Cumberland in 1893; the predominance of the Christian faith amongst its early European settlers; and the location of the first townsite lots to be developed between Allen and Ulverston Avenues and First and Third Streets.

This historic place is valued for its association with the Anderton brothers of Comox (known for building the 1885 St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Comox) who constructed the church in August 1894. Their sister, Mary Paul, was the first church organist. It is further valued for its association with the women of the Catholic congregation, their leadership and mobilization, through which they fundraised for the construction of the expansion of the church in 1911 and for their organization as an Altar Society in 1925 and as part of the Catholic Womens' League in 1944.

Abbey Studio has aesthetic value for its Gothic Revival architectural style, which was popular amongst the 1890s churches in Cumberland, as it was implemented in different iterations in all four original local churches. Although the Catholic Church building was the smallest, and lost its character-defining bell-tower after a 1946 earthquake, its tall, gothic windows (with pointed arch tops) and its steep-pitched gable roofs are indicative of this architectural style.

This historic place has social and cultural value for its transformation from sacred site to a cherished cultural venue in the 1990s, as a general dwindling in membership and attendance led the Bishop to amalgamate all Comox Valley Catholic parishes into one Catholic community in 1985, leaving the Catholic church and hall to be increasingly underused. The last ever Sunday and Christmas Eve masses at the Church of St. John the Evangelist were held in 1984, and the last weekday mass was held in 1990. In 1994 the property was sold to private ownership and under a series of passionate owner-entrepreneurs, the site was rebranded as "The Abbey" in 2004 and ultimately became known as Abbey Studio - a cultural venue housing art shows, concerts, movies, and workshops. Like the Waverley Hotel, the Abbey became a renowned BC live music and performance venue with local and international artists gracing the stage. This legacy has been consistently maintained since 2003 under owner and on-site seasonal resident Cathy Stoyko who has additionally converted the hall space into a long-term residential rental.

Character-Defining Elements

- Church use from 1895 to 1990 (105 years)
- Institutional and community use in Hall (including summer school) from 1941-1990 (49 years)
- Cultural use since 1994
- Partial residential use (sacristy attic and attached 1941 hall building) since 2003
- Original corner location at Penrith and First, along Cumberland's 'Church Row'
- Wood frame construction
- Institutional design and form as expressed in its formal facade and public entrance with double doors, and pointed-arch church-sized windows on Penrith and First elevations.
- Gothic Revival style as expressed in its tall, pointed arch wood-sash windows and its steeply pitched gable roof.
- Evidence of three phases of construction, with two distinct attached church buildings and a side-gabled hall attached to the east side of the church.
- Interior Elements: large, open sanctuary space; stained, wood-clad, coved ceiling; painted wood-clad walls; wood trim around windows and doors.



Front view
(Penrith Ave)



Side view
(First Street)

Current Photographs

Prepared by Elana Zysblat, CAHP :: Ance Building Services Co. Inc. :: ancebuildingservices.com



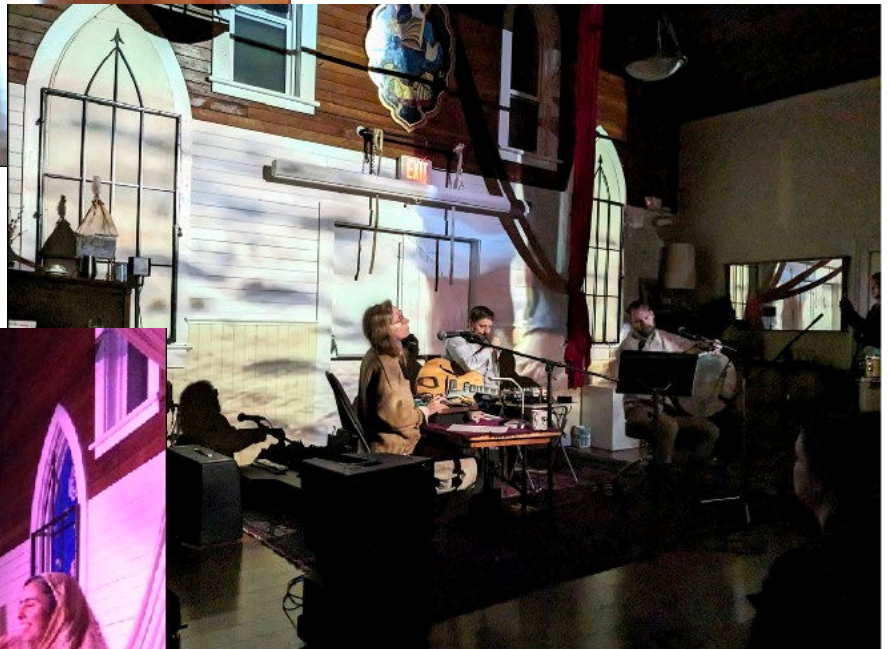
Former United and Catholic Churches in the snow. Source: Gesa Ward via Abbey Studio Facebook page



Current view of the interior, looking towards the entrance doors

Three views of cultural events at the Abbey Studio.

Prepared by Elana Zysblat, CAHP :: Ance Building Services Co. Inc. :: ancebuildingservices.com



Source: Abbey Studio Facebook page

Prepared by Elana Zysblat, CAHP :: Ance Building Services Co. Inc. :: ancebuildingservices.com

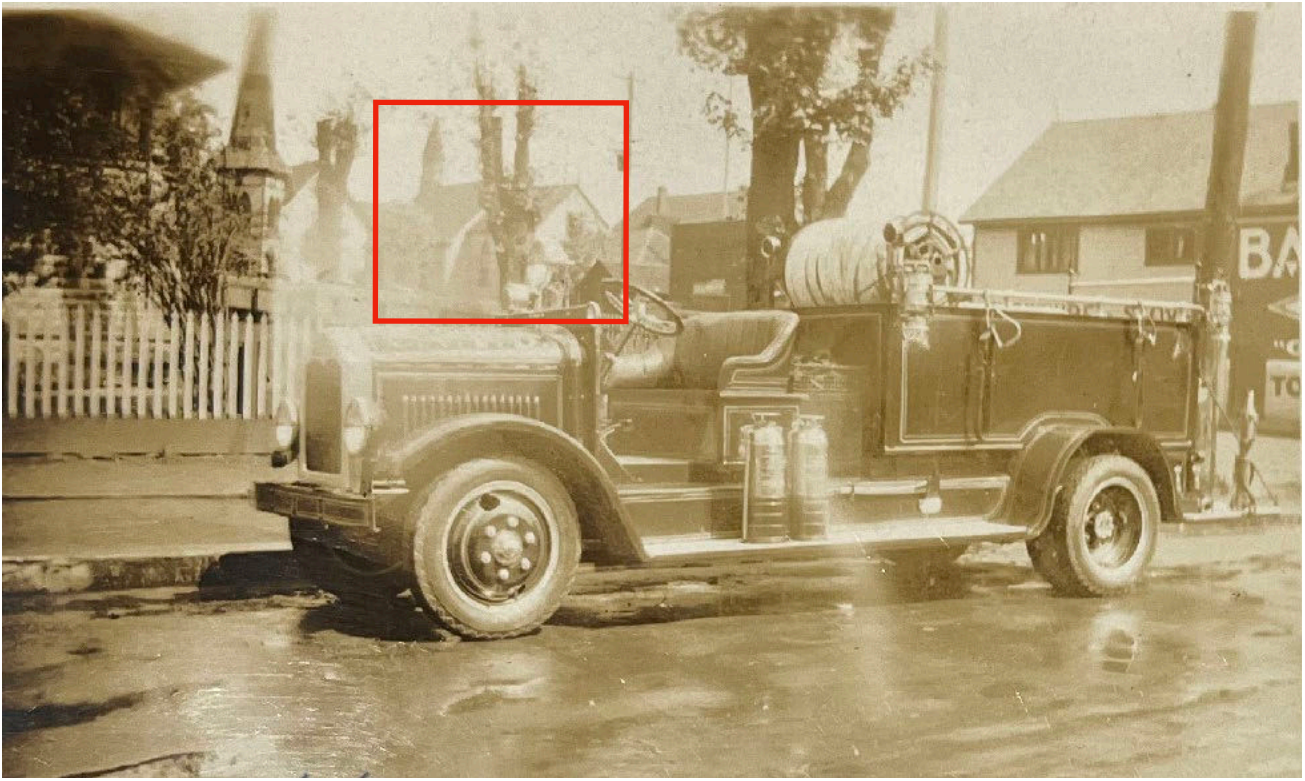


Penrith Avenue showing “Church Row” in 1907. And the Cumberland Public School on First Street. The Catholic Church outlined in red (prior to 1911 extension with bell tower). Source: BC Archives B-07600



Cumberland Public School group photo (div. 6, grade 4 & 5) in 1935, showing Catholic Church in background. Source: Cumberland Museum & Archives C240-128

Archival Photographs



Above: Cumberland's new fire truck with Catholic Church in background, 1932. Source: Cumberland Museum & Archives 2015.208.001 - Banks Family Album 1930s pg128

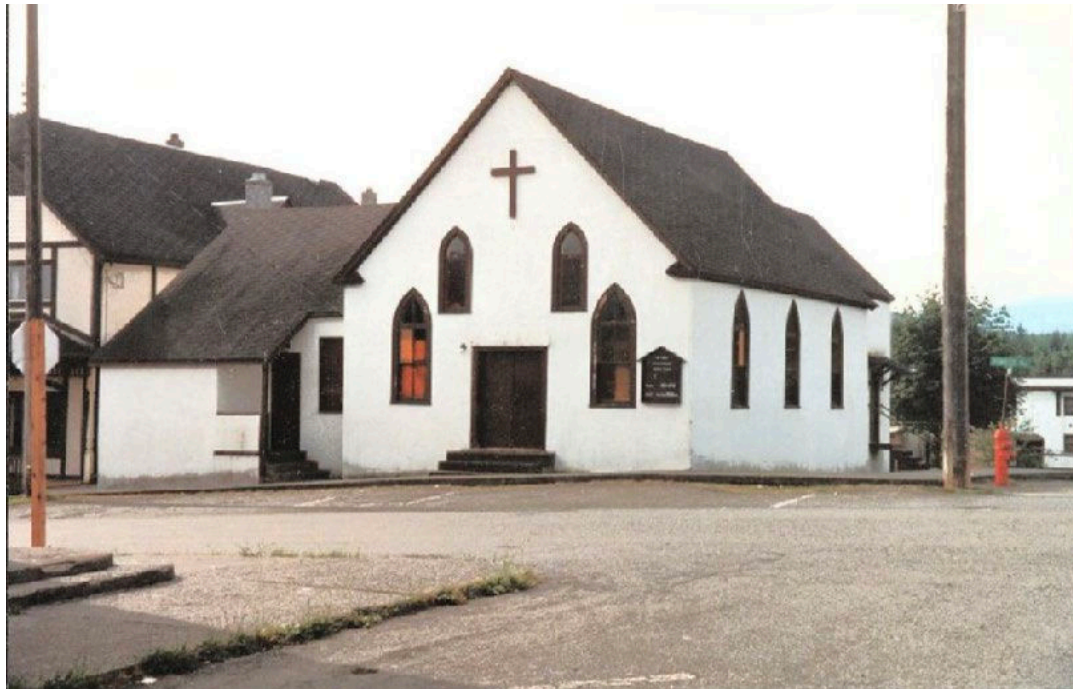


Left: Photo of Catholic Church. Source: Roman Catholic diocese of Victoria, 1939 or 1940 pamphlet. Page 24 dedicated to Cumberland Church.



Left: Pipe band marching in may 1960s. Catholic Church now without bell tower. Note the third small rear gable, to be demolished this same decade. Source: Cumberland Museum & Archives C080-028

Below: Photo of Catholic Church in 1983. Source: Cumberland Museum & Archives C050-015



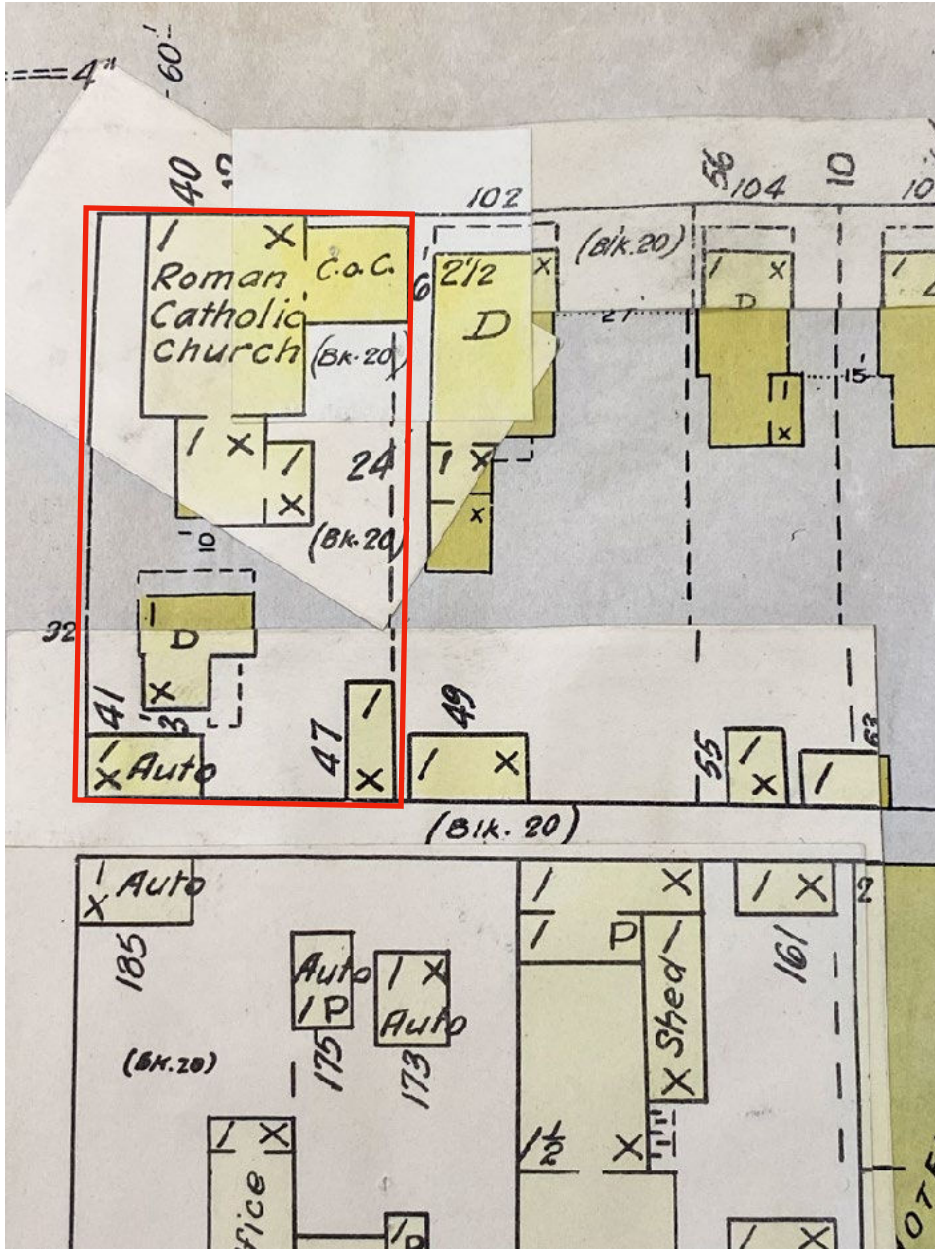


Two images of the Catholic Church in 1994, the year it was sold to private hands. The lower image with boarded up windows. Source: Cumberland Museum & Archives - 2687-89 Penrith Avenue folder.



Top: Catholic Church in 1995. Bottom: Catholic Church in 1996 (note gable cross has been removed)

Source: Cumberland Museum & Archives - 2687-89 Penrith Avenue folder.



1921 Fire Insurance Plan cropped to show the corner of Penrith and First. The subject property is outlined in red. This plan was revised in 1939 and 1941 and thus shows the newly constructed church hall. Also visible is the Priest's House at the rear, deconstructed in 1981.

Source: Courtney Archives

Known renovations and changes:

1899 - Priest house (also known as the Glebe House) was built at the rear of the property to accommodate the Catholic priest when he's come from Comox to conduct services every other week. For the majority of its history, this house was actually rented to local residents.

1911- expansion

1938 - Exterior renovated, involving the staining of the shingle cladding in brown and the trim painted white.

1941 - hall built

1946 (June 23rd) - A 7.0 magnitude earthquake demolished 75% of the chimneys in the communities of Cumberland, Union Bay, and Courtenay. The 1911 Bell tower on the Church of St. John the Evangelist collapsed during this event and was never rebuilt. The cross from the bell tower steeple was reinstalled on the church gable.

1960s - Gabled extension at rear removed. Church stuccoed.

1981 - Priest House dismantled and rebuilt at Brown's River Boy Scout Camp.

1996 - The cross, originally on the bell tower and relocated to the gable in 1946, was removed from the gable. This was two years after the deconsecration of the church and its sale to private ownership.

2003 and later - conversion of attached 1941 hall building to private residence (rental) and of space above sacristy for seasonal owner accommodation.

Research Resources

Courtney Archives:

- Catholic Churches newspaper clippings
- 1954 Courtney Historical Society paper “Work of the Catholic Church in the Comox Valley”
- Fire insurance plan

Cumberland Archives:

- Roman Catholic diocese of Victoria, 1939 or 1940 pamphlet. Page 24 dedicated to Cumberland Church.
- Archival photos
- Newspaper clippings
- Research notes
- Fire insurance plans

Barr, Jennifer. Cumberland & Heritage: The Beginnings of Cumberland 1892-1899

BC Archives - archival photographs

Cumberland Heritage Commission - oral histories

<https://www.ctkparish.ca/history>

<https://www.facebook.com/TheAbbeyStudio/about>

Old Cumberland Facebook Group

Site visit March, 2025



**Corporation of the
Village of Cumberland**

HERITAGE ALTERATION PERMIT

TO: Catherine D Stoyko

AGENT: Owner

OF: PO BOX 1196, Cumberland, BC, V0R1S0

1. This Heritage Alteration Permit **(HAP2502)** is issued subject to compliance with all of the bylaws of the Village of Cumberland applicable thereto, except as supplemented by this Permit for ***separating entrances and deck areas for commercial and residential units on the side facing First Street.***

2. This Heritage Alteration Permit applies to and only to those lands within the Village of Cumberland described below:

Legal Description: *LOT 12, BLOCK 3, DISTRICT LOT 21, NELSON DISTRICT, PLAN 522*

Folio: 000029.000 **PID:** 008-970-408

Civic Address: *2687 Penrith Avenue*

3. The land described herein shall be developed strictly in accordance with the following terms and conditions and provisions of this permit:

HCA1 – Historic Village Commercial Core (Heritage Conservation Area)

- a. Portion of fence to be removed and a wooden picket gate installed to create residential access to rear yard.
- b. Fence matching existing fence to be installed only in front of the residential unit entry facing First Street.
- c. Black coloured metal gate to be installed within the new portion of the fence.
- d. Divider to be installed on the edge of the deck towards residential unit.

4. **Security**

None.

5. **Expiry**

Subject to the terms of the permit, if the Owner of this Heritage Alteration Permit does not substantially start any construction with respect to which the permit was issued within 2 years after the date it is issued, the permit lapses.

- 6.. **Timing and Sequencing of Development**

None.

7. **List of Reports or Plans attached as Schedules**

a. SCHEDULE A

8. **Contaminated Sites Regulation**

A site disclosure statement was not submitted as this permit does not authorize any activity likely to disturb soil on the land.

9. This Permit is **not** a Building Permit.

CERTIFIED as the HERITAGE ALTERATION PERMIT approved and issued by resolution of the Council of the Corporation of the Village of Cumberland on 2025-11-10

Courtney Simpson
Director of Development and
Bylaw Services

Schedule A



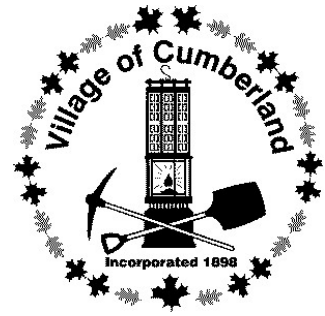
New Divider



New picket gate

MEMO

HERITAGE COMMITTEE



REPORT DATE: 10/31/2025
MEETING DATE: 11/20/2025

File: Cumberland Community Heritage Register

TO: Committee Members
FROM: Jasmeen Kaur Sidhu, Planning Technician
SUBJECT: Additions to the Cumberland Community Heritage Register

The Heritage Committee is requested to provide recommendations to Council with respect to the Statements of Significance (SOS) for the Cumberland Electrical Light Co. Hydro Plant Remnants and the Abbey Studio.

The SOSs were prepared by Elana Zysblast. Recently, the formatting of these documents has been updated to ensure consistency with other SOSs.

Following is a framework for possible resolutions for convenience:

- i. THAT the Heritage Committee recommend that Council accept the Statement of Significance for the Cumberland Electrical Light Co. Hydro Plant Remnants at Coal Creek Historic Park and the Abbey Studio at 2687 Penrith Avenue and add them to the Cumberland Heritage Register.

ATTACHMENTS

1. SOS for the Cumberland Electrical Light Co. Hydro Plant Remnants
2. SOS for the Abbey Studio

Respectfully submitted,

Jasmeen Kaur Sidhu

Jasmeen Kaur Sidhu, Planning Technician

Village of Cumberland



Statement of Significance

Church of St. John the Evangelist (now the Abbey Studio)
2687 Penrith Avenue, Cumberland BC ~ 1895, 1911, 1941



Prepared by Elana Zysblat, CAHP :: Ance Building Services :: July 2025



Description of Historic Place

The Church of St. John the Evangelist, completed in 1895, is a one storey front-gabled building with gothic windows built in two stages: 1895 and 1911. Attached to the east elevation is a one-storey side-gabled hall built in 1941. These wood-framed buildings are located on the corner of Penrith Avenue and First Street in Cumberland, British Columbia.

Heritage Values

Completed and consecrated in 1895, the Church of St. John the Evangelist (now known as the Abbey Studio) has historic value as an important component of Cumberland's 'Church Row' which was established between 1894 and 1895 along Penrith Avenue. Lots were donated to congregations of the community by the mine owners, Union Colliery Co., for the purpose of building churches. Together and individually, these church buildings represent the initial settlement of Union townsite in the 1890s, to be renamed Cumberland in 1893; the predominance of the Christian faith amongst its early European settlers; and the location of the first townsite lots to be developed between Allen and Ulverston Avenues and First and Third Streets.

This historic place is valued for its association with the Anderton brothers of Comox (known for building the 1885 St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Comox) who constructed the church in August 1894. Their sister, Mary Paul, was the first church organist. It is further valued for its association with the women of the Catholic congregation, their leadership and mobilization, through which they fundraised for the construction of the expansion of the church in 1911 and for their organization as an Altar Society in 1925 and as part of the Catholic Women's League in 1944.

Abbey Studio has aesthetic value for its Gothic Revival architectural style, which was popular amongst the 1890s churches in Cumberland, as it was implemented in different iterations in all four original local churches. Although the Catholic Church building was the smallest, and lost its character-defining bell-tower after a 1946 earthquake, its tall, gothic windows (with pointed arch tops) and its steep-pitched gable roofs are indicative of this architectural style.

This historic place has social and cultural value for its transformation from sacred site to a cherished cultural venue in the 1990s, as a general dwindling in membership and attendance led the Bishop to amalgamate all Comox Valley Catholic parishes into one Catholic community in 1985, leaving the Catholic church and hall to be increasingly underused. The last ever Sunday and Christmas Eve masses at the Church of St. John the Evangelist were held in 1984, and the last weekday mass was held in 1990. In 1994 the property was sold to private ownership and under a series of passionate owner-entrepreneurs, the site was rebranded as "The Abbey" in 2004 and ultimately became known as Abbey Studio - a cultural venue housing art shows, concerts, movies, and workshops. Like the Waverley Hotel, the Abbey became a renowned BC live music and performance venue with local and international artists gracing the stage. This legacy has been consistently maintained since 2003 under owner and on-site seasonal resident Cathy Stoyko who has additionally converted the hall space into a long-term residential rental.

Character-Defining Elements

- Church use from 1895 to 1990 (105 years)
- Institutional and community use in Hall (including summer school) from 1941-1990 (49 years)

- Cultural use since 1994
- Partial residential use (sacristy attic and attached 1941 hall building) since 2003
- Original corner location at Penrith and First, along Cumberland's 'Church Row'
- Wood frame construction
- Institutional design and form as expressed in its formal facade and public entrance with double doors, and pointed-arch church-sized windows on Penrith and First elevations.
- Gothic Revival style as expressed in its tall, pointed arch wood-sash windows and its steeply pitched gable roof.
- Evidence of three phases of construction, with two distinct attached church buildings and a side-gabled hall attached to the east side of the church.
- Interior Elements: large, open sanctuary space; stained, wood-clad, coved ceiling; painted wood-clad walls; wood trim around windows and doors.

APPENDIX A – CURRENT PHOTOGRAPHS



Front view
(Penrith Ave)



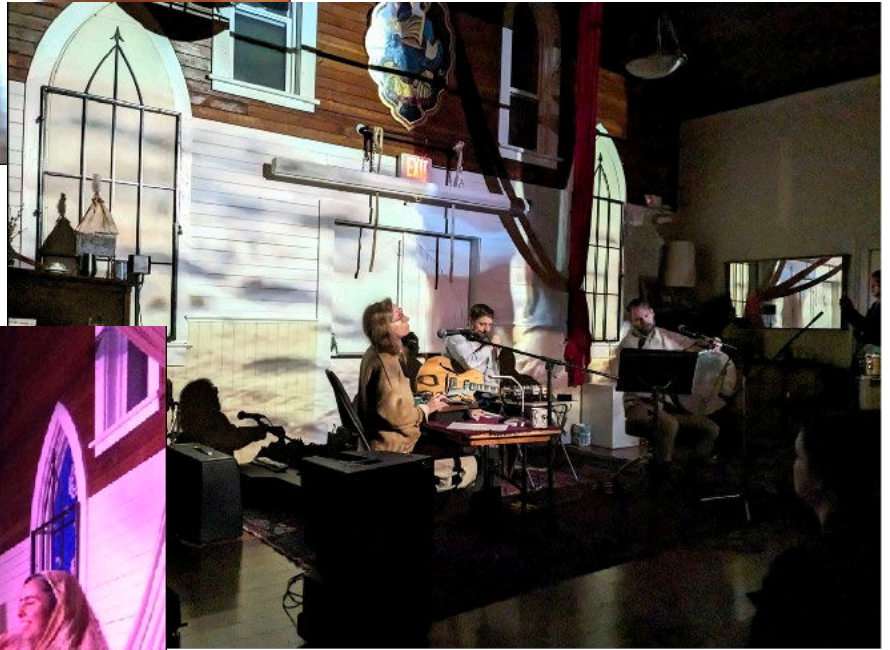
Side view
(First Street)



Former United and Catholic Churches in the snow. Source: Gesa Ward via Abbey Studio Facebook page



Current view of the interior, looking towards the entrance doors



Source: Abbey Studio Facebook page

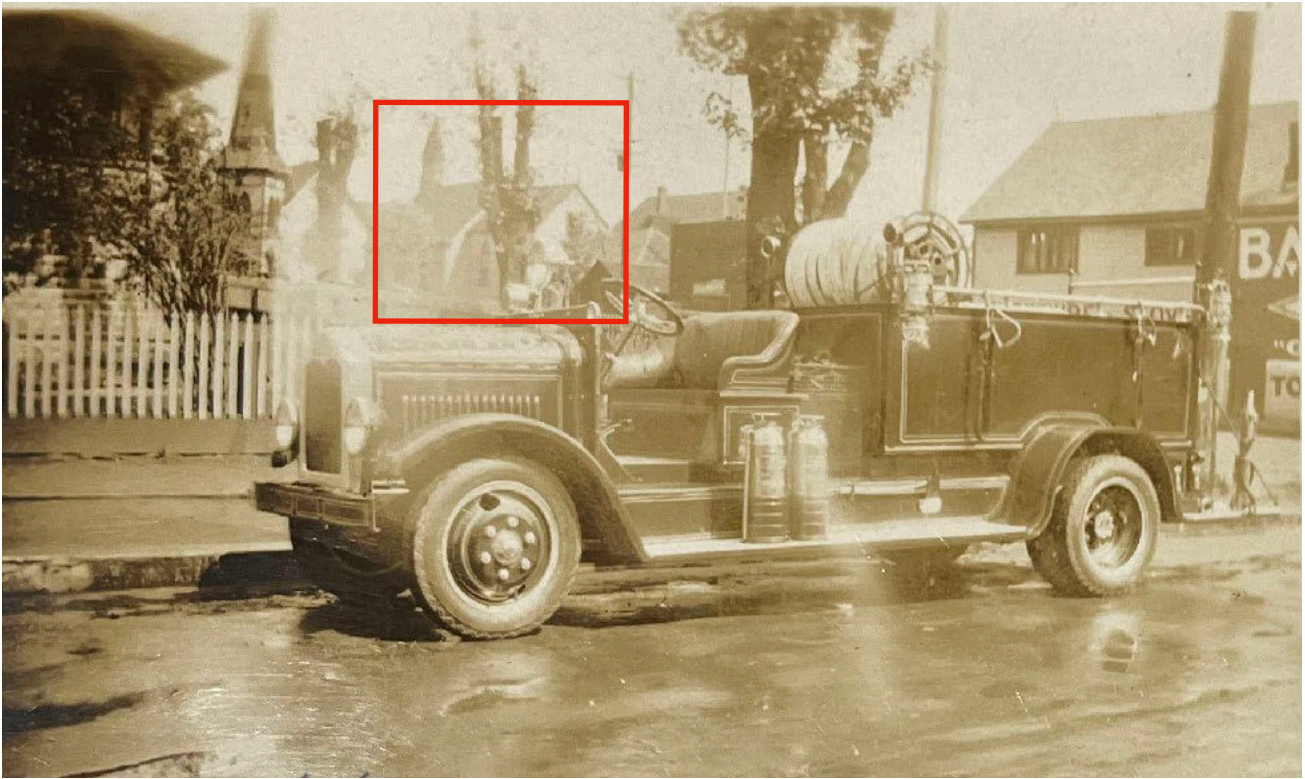
APPENDIX B – HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS



Penrith Avenue showing “Church Row” in 190? And the Cumberland Public School on First Street. The Catholic Church outlined in red (prior to 1911 extension with bell tower). Source: BC Archives B-07600



Cumberland Public School group photo (div. 6, grade 4 & 5) in 1935, showing Catholic Church in background. Source: Cumberland Museum & Archives C240-128



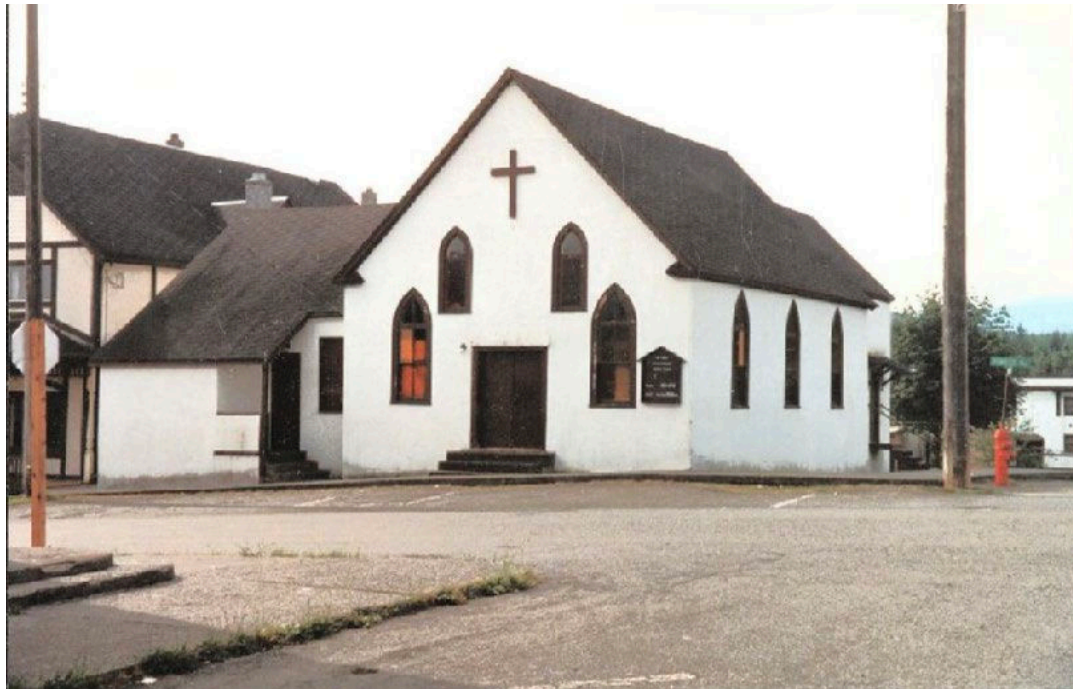
Above: Cumberland's new fire truck with Catholic Church in background, 1932. Source: Cumberland Museum & Archives 2015.208.001 - Banks Family Album 1930s pg128

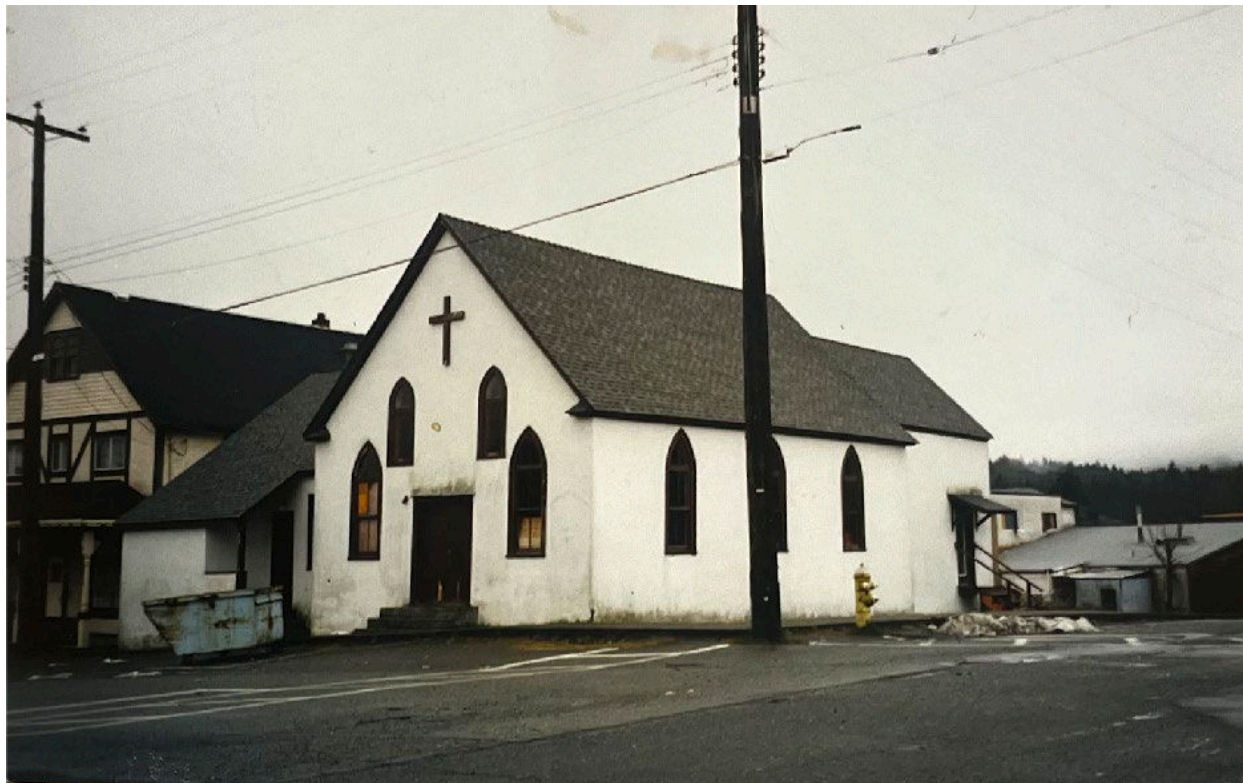
Left: Photo of Catholic Church. Source: Roman Catholic diocese of Victoria, 1939 or 1940 pamphlet. Page 24 dedicated to Cumberland Church.



Left: Pipe band marching in may 1960s. Catholic Church now without bell tower. Note the third small rear gable, to be demolished this same decade. Source: Cumberland Museum & Archives C080-028

Below: Photo of Catholic Church in 1983. Source: Cumberland Museum & Archives C050-015



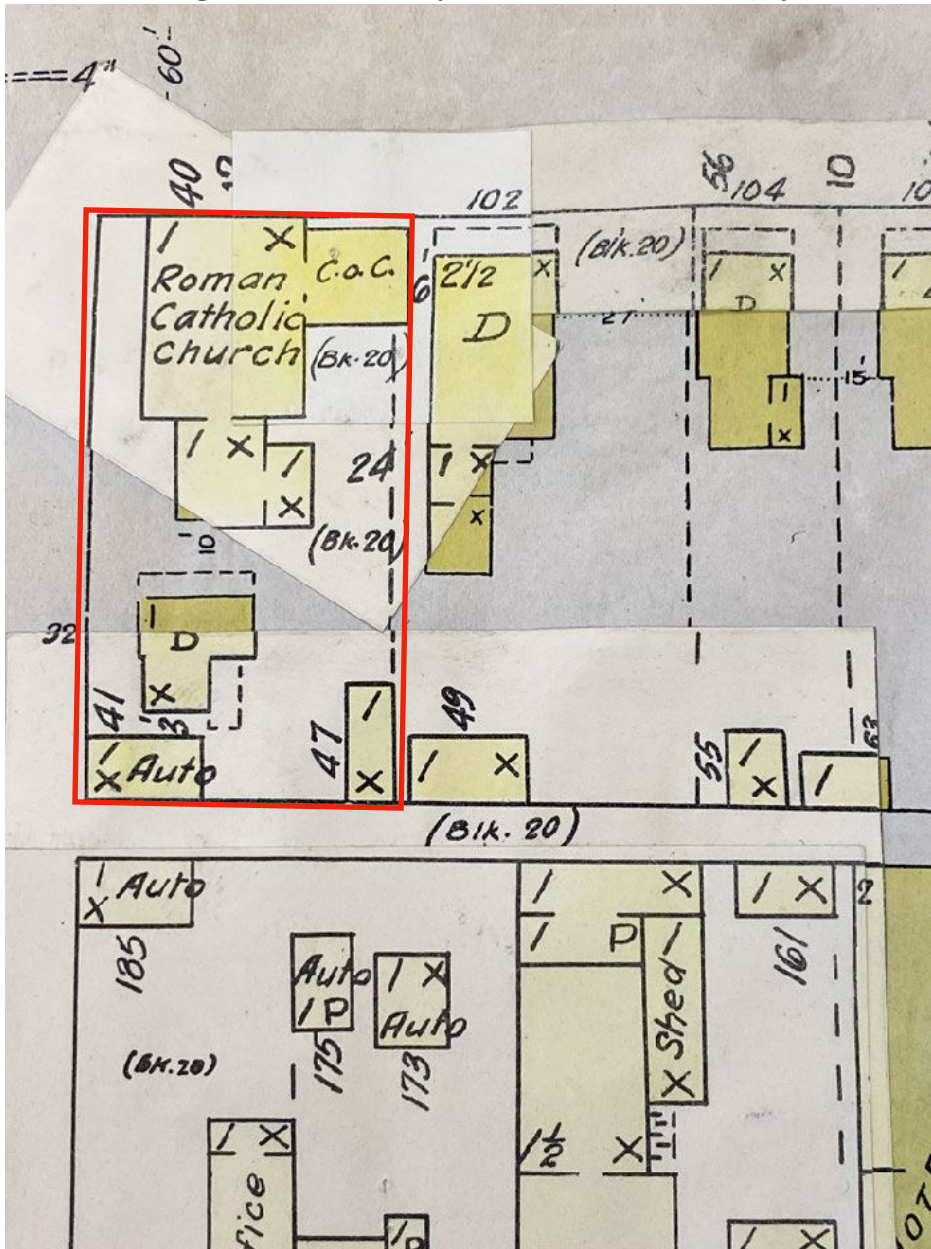


Two images of the Catholic Church in 1994, the year it was sold to private hands. The lower image with boarded up windows. Source: Cumberland Museum & Archives - 2687-89 Penrith Avenue folder.



Top: Catholic Church in 1995. Bottom: Catholic Church in 1996 (note gable cross has been removed)

Source: Cumberland Museum & Archives - 2687-89 Penrith Avenue folder.



1921 Fire Insurance Plan cropped to show the corner of Penrith and First. The subject property is outlined in red. This plan was revised in 1939 and 1941 and thus shows the newly constructed church hall. Also visible is the Priest's House at the rear, deconstructed in 1981.

Source: Courtney Archives

APPENDIX B – HISTORY NOTES

1899 - Priest house (also known as the Glebe House) was built at the rear of the property to accommodate the Catholic priest when he's come from Comox to conduct services every other week. For the majority of its history, this house was actually rented to local residents.

1911- expansion

1938 - Exterior renovated, involving the staining of the shingle cladding in brown and the trim painted white.

1941 - hall built

1946 (June 23rd) - A 7.0 magnitude earthquake demolished 75% of the chimneys in the communities of Cumberland, Union Bay, and Courtenay. The 1911 Bell tower on the Church of St. John the Evangelist collapsed during this event and was never rebuilt. The cross from the bell tower steeple was reinstalled on the church gable.

1960s - Gabled extension at rear removed. Church stuccoed.

1981 - Priest House dismantled and rebuilt at Brown's River Boy Scout Camp.

1996 - The cross, originally on the bell tower and relocated to the gable in 1946, was removed from the gable. This was two years after the deconsecration of the church and its sale to private ownership.

2003 and later - conversion of attached 1941 hall building to private residence (rental) and of space above sacristy for seasonal owner accommodation.

Research Resources

Courtney Archives:

- Catholic Churches newspaper clippings
- 1954 Courtney Historical Society paper “Work of the Catholic Church in the Comox Valley”
- Fire insurance plan

Cumberland Archives:

- Roman Catholic diocese of Victoria, 1939 or 1940 pamphlet. Page 24 dedicated to Cumberland Church.
- Archival photos
- Newspaper clippings
- Research notes
- Fire insurance plans

Barr, Jennifer. Cumberland & Heritage: The Beginnings of Cumberland 1892-1899

BC Archives - archival photographs

Cumberland Heritage Commission - oral histories

<https://www.ckparish.ca/history>

<https://www.facebook.com/TheAbbeyStudio/about>

Old Cumberland Facebook Group

Site visit March, 2025

Village of Cumberland



Statement of Significance

Cumberland Electric Light Co. Hydro Plant Remnants

49.61140° N, 125.05434° W (Coal Creek Historic Park), Cumberland BC :: 1906



INSERT MAP

Description of Historic Place

The Hydro Plant Remnants of the Cumberland Electric Light Co. Ltd. are a rectangular concrete plinth structure measuring approximately 30 feet by 5 feet, located in a forested section of Coal Creek Historic Park along the Dodge City Downhill (DCDH) Trail about 1.5 kms southwest from the core of the Village of Cumberland, BC (49.61140° N, 125.05434° W). Three rectangular metal mounting plates are embedded in it, as well as additional early hydroelectric plant component remnants.

Heritage Values

This historic place is valued for its association with the 45-year legacy of the Cumberland Electric Light Co. Ltd., formed in 1902 to serve the Canadian Colliery interests in the Comox Valley, and expropriated by the BC Power Commission in 1947. This site specifically represents the company's first effort in 1906 to centralize Cumberland-area hydro electric production in one plant after initial operations that had each mine producing their own electricity. This plant supplied not only the No. 6 Mine but also the homes and businesses in Cumberland itself.

This site is valued for its association with American-born, George Wilt Clinton, an employee of the Colliery who established the Electric Co., who is also remembered for supervising the building of the Wellington Colliery Railway in 1888-1889, as the developer of the 1914 Ilo Ilo Theatre in Cumberland, the founder of the Courtenay Light Co. that same year, and for acting as the American Consul in the Comox Valley until 1919. It is also valued for its association with American-born, electrical engineer, Joseph Daniel Winningham, who became the superintendent and electrician of the company's first steam plant in March 1904, and managed its replacement in November 1906 with a larger plant at this location behind Chinatown, for which he oversaw the new infrastructure and technology. Winningham had come to Cumberland from Victoria, where he had worked for the Hinton Electric Company, a dealer in electrical machinery, wiring, and supplies.

These plant remnants hold scientific value for representing the technological shift from steam-generated power to hydroelectricity. As this plant was water wheel (turbine)-powered, it generated a significantly higher quality of electricity than the company's earlier 1902 steam plant that powered only the No. 6. Mine. Electricity here was generated by two separate water wheels mounted on concrete, (and ultimately also by a smaller third one), supplying electricity to the then "City of Cumberland" as well as to the mine camp, Chinatown, Japantown and No. 6 Mine until 1913 when the new Puntledge River power plant, also developed by the Canadian Collieries, began operating.

The plant's strategic location at the northwest foothills of the Beaufort Range (at the time known as Mount George) and about 1000 feet below a series of dams and lakes (with one dam about a mile back from the plant), hints at the dramatic topographic transition between the low Comox Valley (where Cumberland sits) and the mountain ranges to the east that offered the perfect setting for early hydroelectric and waterworks infrastructure to serve Cumberland in its first decades of existence.

Character-defining Elements

- Original location behind Chinatown at the foothills of the Beaufort Range situated in a direct line below a series of lakes and former dams
- Industrial concrete plinth structure measuring approximately 30 feet by 5 feet made up of a rough aggregate mix with river rocks visible at the bottom
- Three rectangular embedded and bolted metal mounting plates - two large and one smaller one, evidently added later
- Three arched water outflow openings in the concrete structure below each mounting plates adapted to the turbine sizes
- A water pipe head between the two large mounting plates
- An additional large metal plate (possibly for anchoring the transformer)
- A vertical metal electrical grounding rod a few feet to the west of the structure
- Association with early waterworks infrastructure that aligned with the 1906 electric grid including a sunken shut-off valve (metal wheel) located a few 100 yards to the east towards Chinatown
- Surrounding access trails and cleared areas that appear to be associated with Cumberland's early hydroelectric and waterworks infrastructure



Above: View of the concrete structure (the elevation facing Chinatown) with two of the arched water outflow openings as well as the outflow metal pipe. Below: View of the top of the structure with embedded and bolted metal mounting plates, as well as the metal plate for anchoring the transformer.



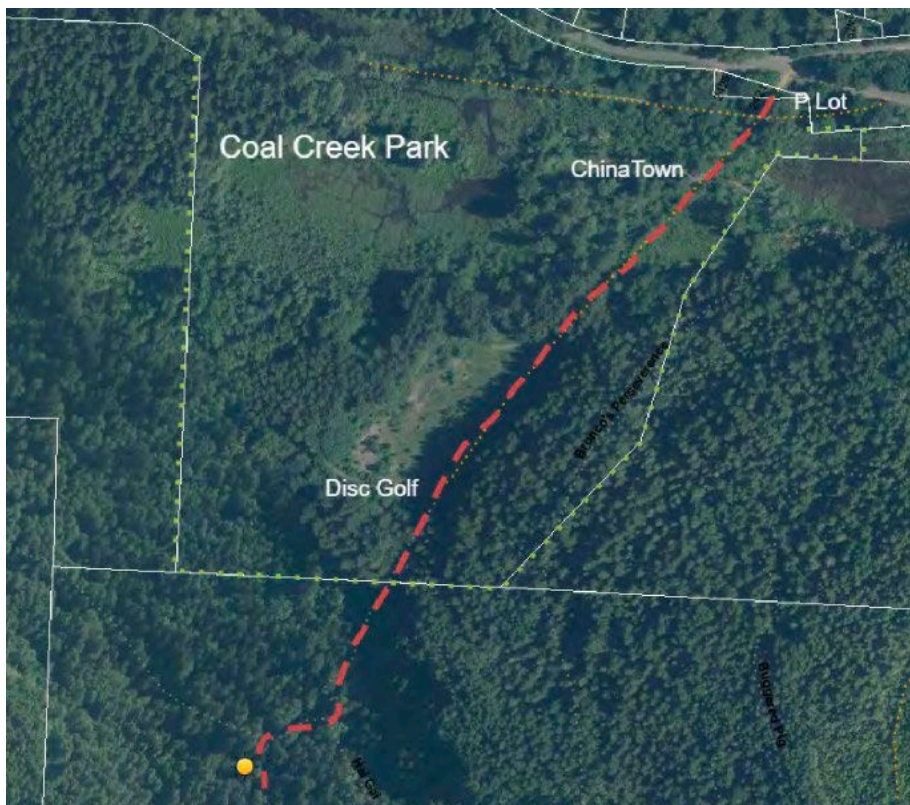
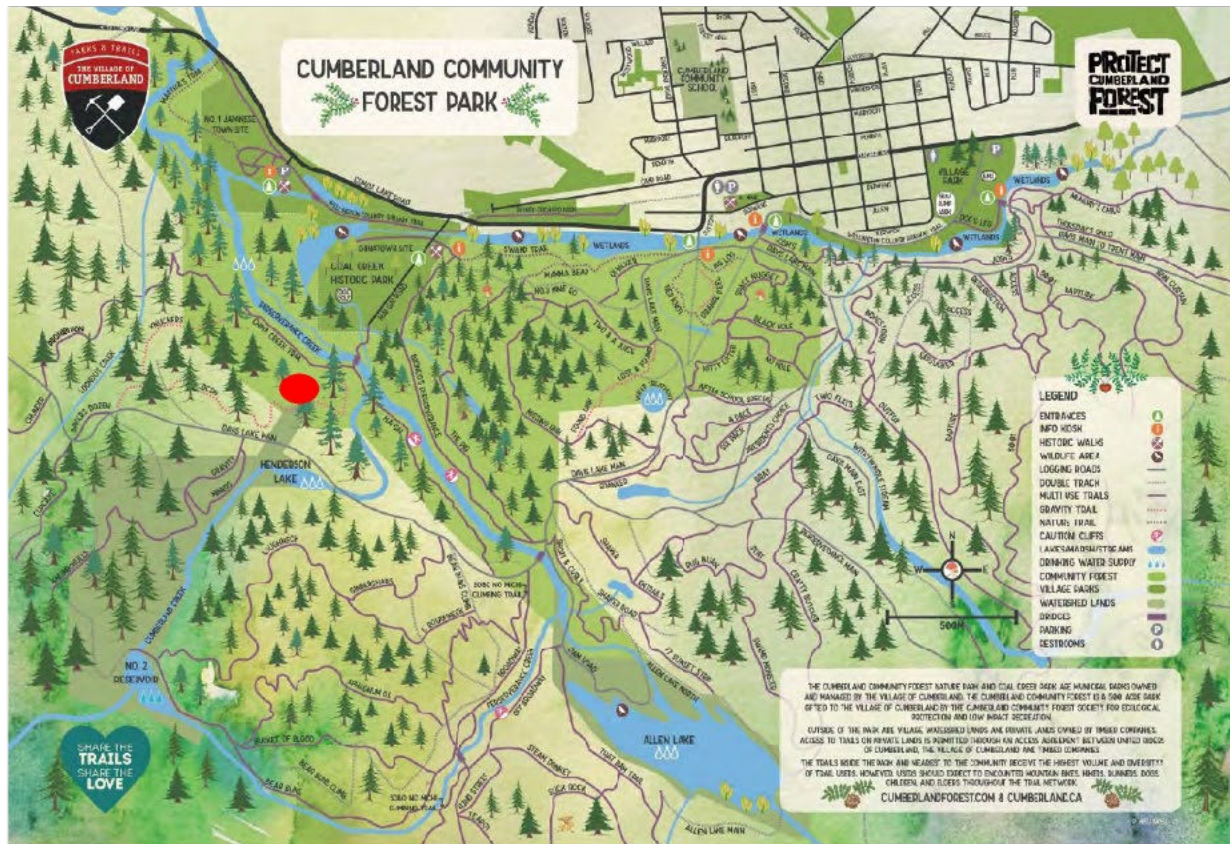
Current Photos



Above: View of the concrete structure from the rear (mountain side). The right portion of the structure appears to have been added. It is lower and has a smaller turbine pier and a smaller arched outlaw opening. Also visible (marked with an arrow) is the grounding rod.

Left: View of the sunken shut-off valve (metal wheel circled) located a few 100 yards to the east towards Chinatown. This infrastructure appears to be framed in wood timbers, capped in aluminum.

Location



Above: Approximate location marked in red on the Cumberland Community Forest Park map.

Left: Precise location (yellow dot) and access trail from parking lot (dashed red line) marked on a Google map.

Historic Brief

The founder of the Cumberland Electric Light Company, George Wilt Clinton (1861-1929), was the Colliery Company's time clerk, paymaster, storekeeper and acting postmaster in the 1890s, working out of the company's office log building which later became the Tan Lee laundry in Chinatown.

The Cumberland Electric Light Company's first 1902 plant was housed in a building alongside No. 6 Mine and was run by steam from a pipe connected with the mine engines. In November 1906 the Cumberland Electric Light Co. moved to a new location behind Chinatown at the foot of what was then known as Mount George. This 1906 plant was housed in a 20' x 40' powerhouse building with an excellent water supply served by a series of dams and lakes running water to the plant through a 10 inch pipe. There was a dam about a mile back from the plant at a height of 1000 feet above it. This new plant supplied not only the No. 6 Mine but also the homes and businesses in Cumberland itself.

Joseph Daniel Winningham (American-born in 1875, married in Victoria, BC 1899) became the superintendent and electrician of the company's first steam plant in March 1904, taking over from Mr. Hy Campbell, and managed its replacement in November 1906 with a larger plant at this location behind Chinatown, for which he oversaw the new infrastructure and technology. Winningham had come to Cumberland from Victoria, where he had worked for the Hinton Electric Company, a dealer in electrical machinery, wiring, and supplies. He left the Cumberland Electric Light Co. in July 1913 to return to Victoria, in time with the opening of the new Puntledge powerhouse. He died in Comox at age 49 in May, 1923.

Even the 1906 plant wasn't sufficient for the growing needs of the mining and towns of the valley. A bigger power plant was designed, with the site selected for the development of a regional electric powerhouse on the Puntledge River just below Comox Lake. It involved storage of water in the lake. The construction of the power plant started in 1911. The powerhouse and foundations were completed in the year 1912 while the construction of the dam and the penstocks and installation of the machinery was completed in the year 1913. The power was switched on for the first time in August 1913, likely nulling the need for the 1906 plant behind Chinatown, as this new powerhouse not only supplied all the power requirements for the various mining operations but also supplied light and power in bulk to the neighbouring towns under contract to the Cumberland Electric Light Company, the Courtenay Light Company and the Royston Electric Light Company. This operation continued for many years. In 1947, the plant was expropriated from Canadian Collieries Limited by the BC. Power Commission, BC Hydro's predecessor. The company then rebuilt the diversion dam, penstocks and powerhouse to expand the electrical output to nearby communities. The dam was upgraded once again in 1982.

Devoted Especially, to the interests of Comox District

CUMBERLAND B. C., TUESDAY, DEC. 3, 1907.

The City's Light.

The News man "On the Wing" Sees "The Juice" Turned On.

About a fortnight ago the Cumberland Electric Light Co. which supplies the city and camp with light moved into their new home at some distance behind Chinatown at the foot of Mount George. Owing to a rash of job-work which kept the whole office staff busy our man on the wing failed to keep his appointment to visit the new house and our readers were denied a pleasure which we trust they

When the Company first opened up for business some five years ago the plant was housed in a building alongside No. 6 mine and the plant was run by steam from a pipe connected with the mine engines. Last year the Company added to their plant a water wheel which it was found assisted materially in giving a much better light and so satisfactory was the one wheel that the management decided to run the whole plant by water.

Accordingly this year a new building about 20 x 40 was erected and connected with an excellent supply of water. Extensive improvements have been made this year to the water system by the Cumberland and Union Water-Works Co. A series of dams and lakes now supply the water to the city and camp and also the electric plant, the water to run the plant coming through a ten inch pipe from a dam about a mile back and from a height of about 1000 feet. Some places the pipes are almost perpendicular. The pressure we were informed is over 400 pounds to the square inch and about double that of the pipes supplying the city and camp.

The equipment of the plant is composed of two separate water wheel units, which make about 1500 revolutions per minute but can be raised to double that speed; two 90 kilowatt 2200 volts alternators; two 2 kilowatt exciters, all being set in solid cement about six feet deep; and other necessary appliances, including two magnificent marble switchboards.

One generator supplies the city with light, while the other does duty for the camp, Chinatown, Jap town and No. 6 mine. The capacity of each is somewhere in the neighborhood of 2,000 lights, and is capable of supplying many more lights than present requirement.

It would be impossible to pass by without reference to "the man behind the light" Mr. J. D. Wittingham, and who turns on the "juice" having the management of the plant generally. He has been with the Company about four years and has proved himself a careful and practical all round man, although he would probably blush if one called him an expert, yet claiming about fifteen years experience some of which was spent in Seattle, and in the employ of the Hinton Electric Co. of Victoria before taking up his present position. His services are well understood locally and are

The Fire.

On Wednesday morning last the citizens were aroused by the ringing of the fire bell at about 2 a. m. There was a scramble and a rush to the scene of the fire—the stable used by the Comox Co-operative Association and Mr. P. Monte.

The fire itself had an excellent start. There was a delay in having the water turned on account of not being able to find the nozzles. Once the water was streaming on the flames from the two nozzles the fire was under control in a few minutes, but much of the hay had to be thrown out before the firemen deemed it wise to retire.

The alarm was first sounded by some young folks who were enjoying themselves at the home of Mr. Charles McDonald.

The losers are Mr. P. Monte, owner of a very valuable horse; the Comox Co-operative Association of a horse; Mr. W. Harrison owner of the premises.

Suspicion that the fire was not merely accidental but the work of the fire fiend led to an investigation being held on Thursday evening before the police commissioners. Mr. P. Phillips Harrison conducted the inquiry. After considering all the evidence brought in the commissioners came to the conclusion that

"Upon considering all the evidence adduced in the premises, we the undersigned police commissioners of the City of Cumberland have mutually come to the conclusion that the said nozzles concealed as aforesaid, were willfully so concealed and that the aforesaid was willfully ignited or started by some person or persons to us unknown."

has charge of the plant during the still hours of the night.

The move from the old to new home was done in two days. The plant supplying camp was moved one day and when it came time to turn on the lights the plant was running along as steadily as though it had done duty before. When the city plant was moved and had it not been for the slight mishap of a "hot box" everything would have been well. As it was everything was all O. K. in the course of a couple of hours.

The Company we understand is controlled by local capital who deserve credit for the enterprise shown in providing such an excellent system of lighting, and it is safe to say that the citizens of no city of the same size has better light.

Mr. R. O. Emdo accompanied by his sister returned from flatland, North Dakota where they were on a visit to their parents. "Ed" is enthusiastic over his trip but glad to get back to business and to Cumberland.

Mr. H. Heritage and family left for Vancouver on Thursday.

Mrs. O. P. Stevens has as a guest her mother who arrived on Wednesday.

When the Company first opened up for business some five years ago the plant was housed in a building alongside No. 6 mine and the plant was run by steam from a pipe connected with the mine engines. Last year the Company added to their plant a water wheel which it was found assisted materially in giving a much better light and so satisfactory was the one wheel that the management decided to run the whole plant by water.

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Left: Newspaper article titled "The City's Light" from December 3, 1907 announcing the new hydroelectric plant behind Chinatown. The most relevant paragraphs are outlined in red and enlarged above. Source: Cumberland News newspaper - UBC Special Collections

Mr Winningham is now in charge of the Electric Light Works, Mr Hy Campbell going back to his former position with the Colliery Coy.

March 8, 1904 notice naming J. D. Winningham as the new the manager of the Electric Light Works taking over from Hy Campbell.

Source: Cumberland News newspaper - UBC Special Collections

NOTICE.

On account of necessary repairs the electric lights will be shut off from 12 30 a.m. Sunday, June 5th, to 7 p m. Monday, June 6th.

Cumberland Electric Lighting Co.
J. D WINNINGHAM, Manager

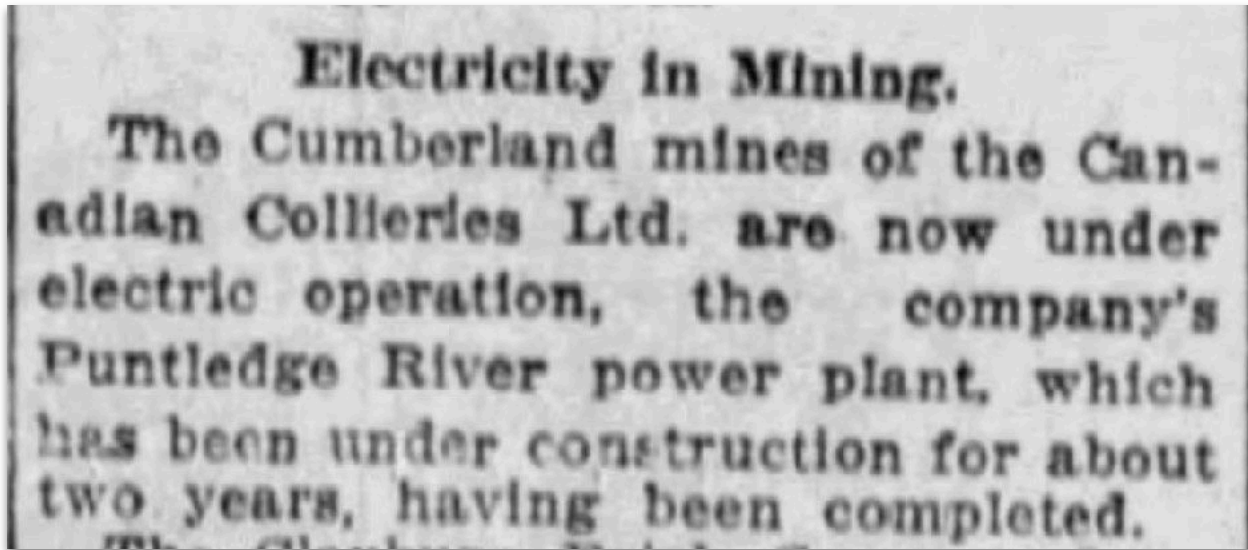
May 31, 1904 notice naming J. D. Winningham the manager of the Cumberland Electric Light Co.

Source: Cumberland News newspaper - UBC Special Collections

Mr. J. D. Winningham, who for a number of years has been electrician for Cumberland Electric Light Co., Ltd., has resigned his position, and will leave this week for Victoria, where his family has been for some time. We wish "Harry" every success wherever in future he may locate.

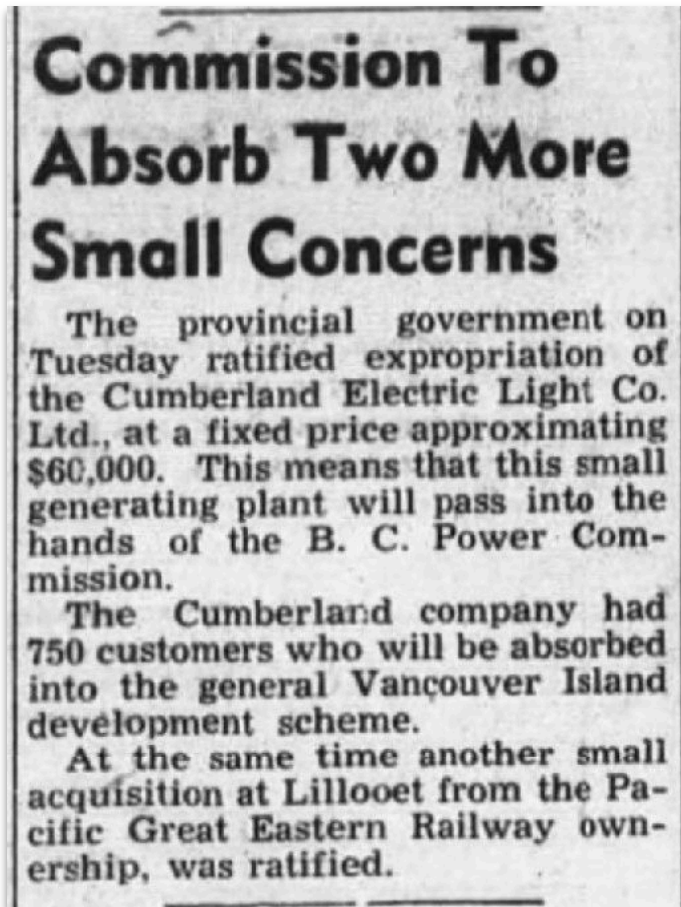
June 30, 1913 notice announcing J. D. Winningham leaving the Cumberland Electric Light Co.

Source: Cumberland News newspaper - UBC Special Collections



Above: October 25, 1913 announcement about the opening/operations of the Puntledge River power plant which replaced the subject site.

Source: The Province newspaper - newspapers.com



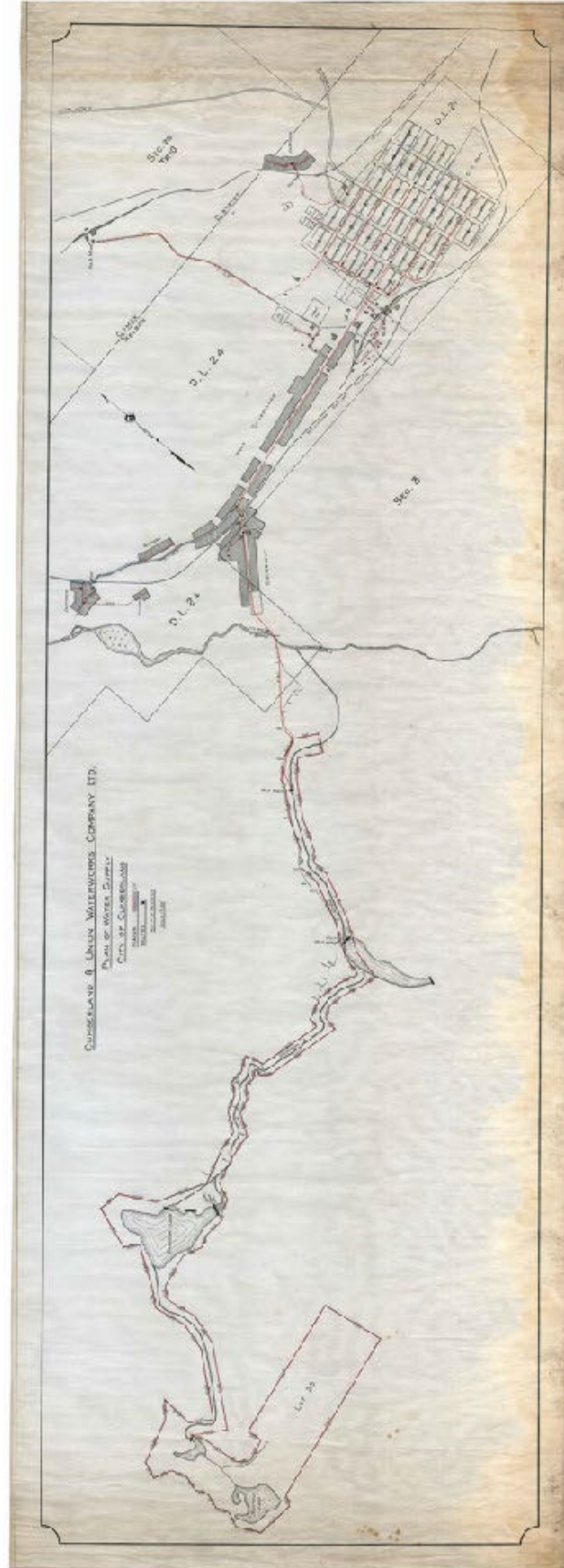
Left: June 4, 1947 article announcing the taking over of the power plant by the BC Power Commission to become BC Hydro after a merger in 1962.

Source: Nanaimo Daily News newspaper - newspapers.com



A Cumberland Electric Lighting Co. Neon sign held at the Cumberland Museum & Archives. Photo courtesy of Dawn Copeman.

A Cumberland & Union Waterworks plan from 1920, showing how water at the time was supplied to Chinatown, the two Japanese neighbourhoods, the black community's neighbourhood, the City of Cumberland and to No. 5 and 6 Mines. Source: Village of Cumberland files.



Research Resources

Cumberland Archives

Biography of George Wilt Clinton

Cumberland News newspaper hard copies 1901-1907

Cumberland Electric Light Co. Ltd. receipt

Cumberland Electric Light Co. Ltd. neon sign

Village of Cumberland

Cumberland & Union Waterworks Company Ltd. - 1920 water supply map

Courtney Archives

Aug 3, 1990. The Record newspaper - Article by Patrick Hind about the history of electric power in the Comox Valley.

UBC Special Collections

Cumberland Islander and Cumberland News archival articles about Clinton, Winningham and the Cumberland Electric Light Co. from the late 1880s until 1929

Isenor, Dick E.; Stephens, Edith G.; Watson, Donna E. 1988. One Hundred Spirited Years: A History of Cumberland. Ptarmigan Press. Pages

newspapers.com

Site visit March, 2025