

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



**January 15 at 4:00 p.m.  
Masonic Hall, 2687 Dunsmuir Avenue, 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 December 4, 2025

**3. Unfinished Business**

None

**4. New Business**

- 4.1 Council Referral: Japanese Canadian Legacy Project – Japanese Town Shelter Concepts, presentation by James Godwin, Lanarc
- 4.2 Council Referral: HAP 2505 Japanese Cemetery

**5. Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Heritage Committee is scheduled for February 12, 2026 at 4:00pm

**6. Adjournment**

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

**December 4, 2025 at 4:00 p.m.  
Masonic Hall, 2687 Dunsmuir Avenue, Cumberland, BC**



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

Regrets: Kaili Zevenbergen

Staff: Jasmeen Kaur Sidu, Planning Technician  
Karin Albert, Senior Planner  
Courtney Simpson, Director of Development and Bylaw Services

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The chair called the meeting to order at 4:06pm.

**1. Approval of Agenda**

Moved by: Harris  
Seconded by: Borecky

THAT the agenda for December 4, 2025 be approved.

**Carried Unanimously**

**2. Minutes**

Moved by: Harris  
Seconded by: Borecky

THAT the minutes of the October 16, 2025 meeting be adopted.

**Carried Unanimously**

**3. Unfinished Business**

None.

**4. New Business**

**4.1 Council Referral HAP 2502-2687 Penrith Avenue, the Abbey Studio**

Jasmeen presented on the HAP for the fence at the Abbey Studio.

*Discussion:*

- Recognition of the important function the building serves in the community as a meeting and event space.
- The change made is fairly minor.
- There are currently five different types of fences due to alterations and additions over time. It is not unusual to see changes to buildings, what is “historic” is often messy.
- Appearance of fences and railings is hodge podge and could have been thought out better.
- The recent additions/improvements in wood could be stained to make everything darker and create unity across the different installations. The black rod iron gate will recede and be visually neutral.

Moved by: Pattison

Seconded by: Harris

THAT the Heritage Committee recommend that Council approve HAP 2502 with the condition that all the front facing wood be stained a dark brown colour.

**Carried**

**One abstention**

**4.2 Statement of Significance for the Abbey Studio and Cumberland Electric Co. Hydro Plant Remnants**

*Discussion*

The two Statements of Significance shared earlier this year with the Committee have been finalized.

Moved by: Borecky

Seconded by: McLean

THAT the Heritage Committee recommend to Council to add the Abbey Studio and Cumberland Electric Co. Hydro Plant Remnants to the Cumberland Community Heritage Register.

**4.3 Presentation on Heritage Conservation Plan – 3831 Moncton St., Richmond, BC**

Hugh McLean presented on a conservation plan for Ikeda Dry Goods in Steveston.

The building is similar to some of the commercial buildings in Cumberland. It is small and modest, representing early commercial buildings in the community.

Steveston is also a Heritage Conservation Area. Cumberland's Historic Village Commercial Core has a lot in common with Steveston. As part of a Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA), the owners of the property at 3831 Moncton Street, were able to obtain additional density on the property for a proposed 3-storey boutique hotel behind the Ikeda Dry Goods building on the same lot. As part of the HRA, the owners were also able to get funding from the City of Richmond to restore the historic building. Hugh explained the restoration work that was undertaken.

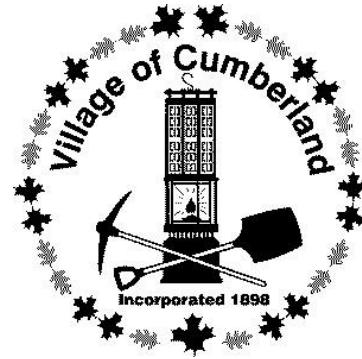
**5. Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Heritage Committee is scheduled for Thursday, January 15, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.

**6. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50pm.

# COUNCIL REPORT



REPORT DATE: November 26, 2025

MEETING DATE: January 5, 2026

File No. 5800 Parks - JCL

TO: Mayor and Councillors  
FROM: Kevin McPhedran, Director of Community Services  
SUBJECT: Japanese Canadian Legacy Project – Update and Referral to Heritage Committee

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## RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council refer the Japanese Canadian Legacy Project No. 1 Japanese Town Shelter concepts to the Heritage Committee for feedback; AND THAT Council receive this report for information as an update on the Japanese Canadian Legacy Project, including the scopes for the Nikkei No Haka Japanese Cemetery, No. 1 Japanese Town in Coal Creek Historic Park, and Nikkei Park.

## PURPOSE

To present Council with an update on the Japanese Canadian Legacy Project (JCLP) and to request referral of the No. 1 Japanese Town Shelter options to the Heritage Committee for feedback.

## PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

Date	Resolution
February 10, 2025	<i>At Council's February 10<sup>th</sup> 2025 meeting, Council approved an updated Community Services Department 2025-27 Strategic Workplan. Specifically for the Japanese Canadian Legacy Project, the following change was endorsed: to reduce the scope of the project to focus on improvements to Japanese Cemetery, No 1 Townsite in Coal Creek Historic Park, and Nikkei Park.</i>
February 26, 2024	<i>THAT Council support the submission of a grant application to the Japanese Canadian Legacies Society for the purpose of funding the proposed heritage sites project <i>Echoes of Community: Revitalizing Japanese Canadian Heritage in Cumberland &amp; the Comox Valley</i>.</i>

## BACKGROUND

In July 2023, the Village was advised by the Japanese Canadian Legacies Society that it was eligible for Heritage Sites funding up to \$400,000 for a public historic spaces project. In February 2024, Council approved a grant funding application to the Japanese Canadian Legacy Society for a multifaceted Japanese Canadian heritage legacy project in the Village. The scope of the project as

endorsed at that time included new outdoor recreation infrastructure at Village Park (that was to be based on park plans to be developed in a yet-to-be initiated Village Park Master Planning process); Cemetery improvements; and additional works at the to-be-developed Nikkei Park. Further, the scope also included formally partnering with the Comox Valley Regional District for heritage parks infrastructure in CVRD Electoral Area Parks, as well as with the Cumberland Museum and Archives in support of project research and site interpretive materials. Upon implementing the project in spring 2024, staff encountered several obstacles and the scope of the proposed project was assessed to not be feasible based on available time, and funding and staff resources. Barriers included the CVRD Parks Department no longer being available to enter into a partnership for project scope in Electoral Area parks; revisions to the Village Park Master Plan project schedule creating feasibility obstacles for the scope proposed at Village Park; delays in the developer-lead landscape construction works at Nikkei Park; and the limited availability of Village and CMA project management resources based on other priority projects and other factors.

In February 2025, staff provided this status update to Council as part of a broader strategic work planning exercise for the Community Services Department; at this time, Council gave direction to rescope the project to a size and complexity that would make it practical to implement prior to the grant funder's substantial construction completion deadline of the end of 2026.

Since spring 2026, staff have:

- secured the services of a landscape architecture/park planning consultant to support revisions in project scope and to provide project design and administration services through to project completion;
- using the revised scope, entered into an updated funding agreement with the Japanese Canadian Legacy Society, and
- have entered into a consulting services agreement with CMA for the research and development of project interpretive materials.

With these tasks now completed, the main risks to the project were mitigated and detailed site design and research began this fall.

The scope of the project now focuses on three main sites of historic Japanese-Canadian significance in the Village:

### **1. Nikkei No Haka Cemetery**

The updated scope includes several heritage-sensitive improvements intended to preserve and interpret this important cultural site. A separate staff report on this agenda addresses the required Heritage Alteration Permit for the new perimeter fencing.

- Replacement of the existing perimeter fence with a new 4' wood picket fence (~244 m) and installation of perimeter boulders along the parking edge (5 m spacing) where the existing fence is proposed not to be replaced.
- Retention of the existing cemetery gate.
- Restoration of existing historic headstones.
- Installation of up to three interpretive signs with photos and contextual text.

See attachment 1 and 2 for the proposed site design schematic and fence detail, and the separate report on this agenda for the Heritage Alteration Permit process and referral to the Heritage Committee.

## **2. No. 1 Japanese Town Improvements**

The No. 1 Japanese Town site improvements include a new park shelter designed with a baseball theme, reflecting the area's documented cultural and recreational history. Two concept designs have been proposed, and staff recommend referring these concepts—which detail design attributes and other considerations such as massing, timber versus metal material selection, and potential Japanese joinery features—to the Heritage Committee for feedback. For clarity, it is proposed that this feedback would then be implemented directly into the design process (i.e. not brought back to Council as would happen if this was a formal referral of a Heritage Alteration Permit).

- Construction of an approximately 5 m x 7 m timber or metal shelter (baseball dugout -themed concept).
- Interpretive signage
- Landscape upgrades to enhance visitor experience and site access.

See attachments 3 and 4 for proposed No. 1 Japanese Town site design schematic and covered shelter options.

## **3. Nikkei Park – Interpretive Signage**

Up to three interpretive signs are proposed for Nikkei Park or adjacent sites on the North Wellington Colliery Trail to strengthen public understanding of Japanese Canadian history in Cumberland and to support the creation of a connected interpretive network across key heritage locations. As the extent of the scope at Nikkei Park is limited to signage development and installation, and based on the project schedule there isn't currently time available to refer all project sign content to the Heritage Committee (noting that a thorough museum and JCLS review process is already built into the scope), the Nikkei Park scope is not proposed to be referred to the Heritage Committee.

### **Next Steps:**

- Referral of No. 1 Japanese Town Shelter concepts to the Heritage Committee for feedback
- Processing of Heritage Alteration Permit for the Cemetery fence replacement (separate report, including referral to the Heritage Committee).
- Continued research and development of interpretive content, led by the museum (with heritage consultation), including referral to the Japanese Canadian Legacy Society for content review (as well as other ongoing engagement with JCLS on the project)
- Preparation of final design packages for procurement.
- Construction

The target construction completion date is end of 2026, in alignment with the grant deadline.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

A Class D cost estimate (July 2025) places the total project cost at approximately \$251,657, inclusive of construction, contingency, soft costs, and future consulting needs. Costs are subject to refinement through detailed design and procurement. This budget aligns with the revised grant

funding amount. Village in-kind staff costs are not accounted for in this budget and are significant (see below).

## **OPERATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

The project is being led by the Director of Community Services, and supported by a landscape architecture consulting firm for design and administrative support. Further the Cumberland and Museum and Archives are contributing research and interpretive material development services. In addition to the allocation of project management resources from the Community Services Department, the project is also requiring resources from the Corporate Officer (cemetery manager) for the Cemetery Scope, as well as Development Services staff time for Heritage Alteration Permit processing.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

N/A

## **ALTERNATIVES**

Not refer the Project No. 1 Japanese Town Shelter concepts and related project scope to the Heritage Committee for feedback.

## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE**

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

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Cemetery Schematic Design
2. Proposed Cemetery Fence Detail
3. No 1 Japanese Town Schematic Design
4. No 1 Japanese Town – Park shelter options

## **CONCURRENCE**

Rachel Parker, Corporate Officer ***RP***

Respectfully submitted,

***K. McPhedran***

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Kevin McPhedran, Director of Community Services

***M. Mason***

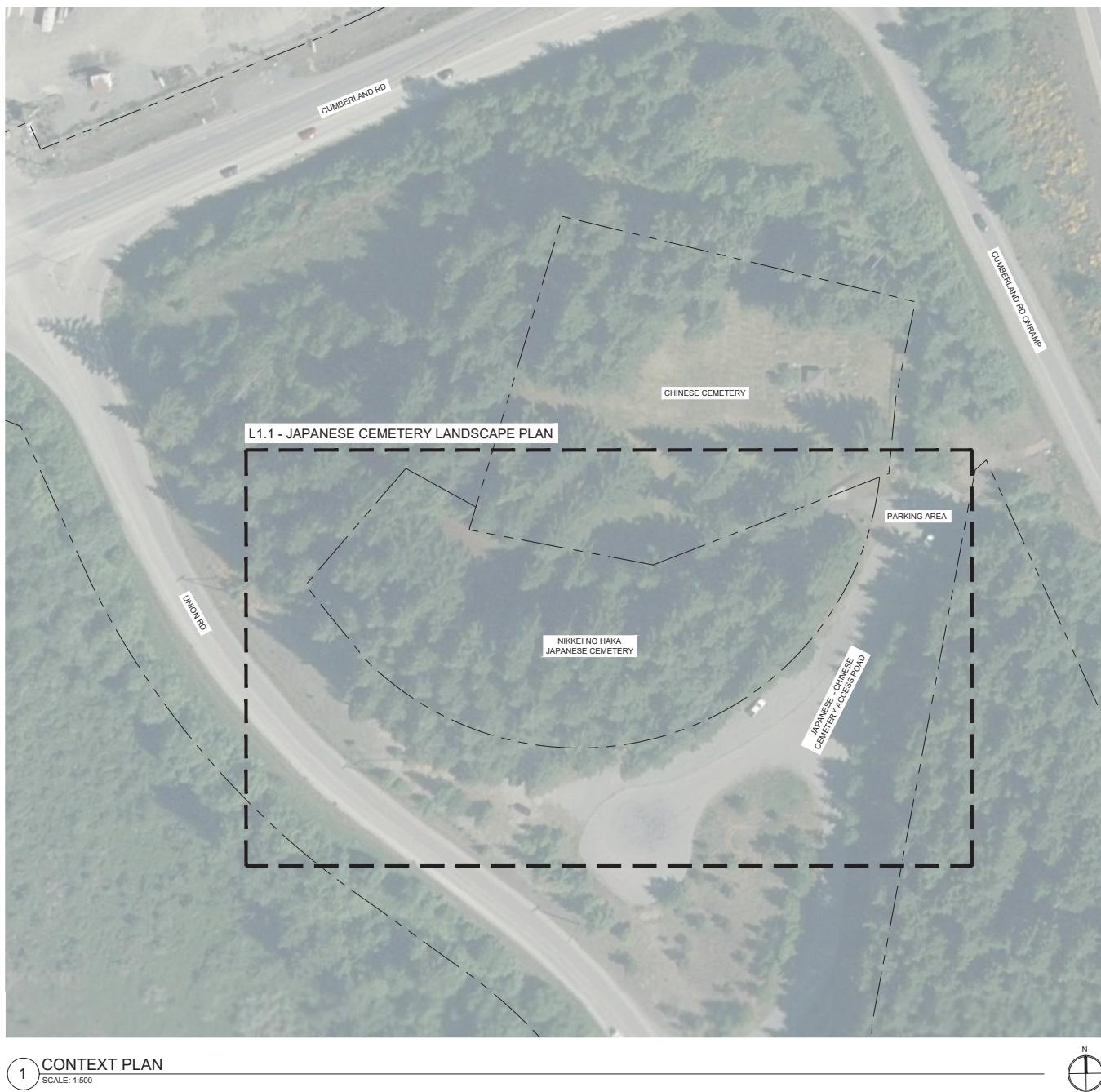
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Michelle Mason  
Chief Administrative Officer

## NOTES

1. REFER TO GENERAL NOTES ON L0.0

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**PRELIMINARY**  
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

Schematic Design GL JO 25.11.07

Issued By Appd. YY MM DD

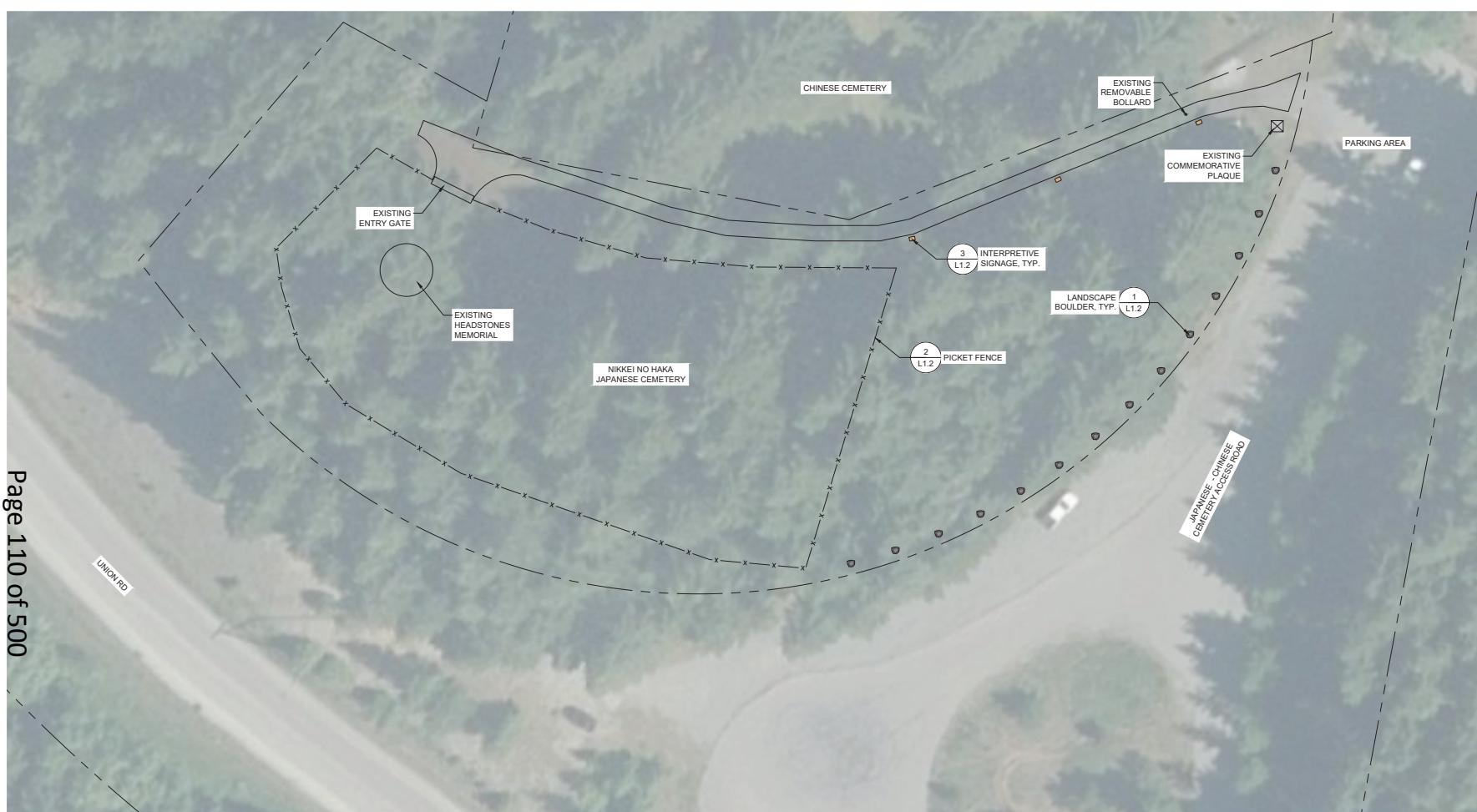
Permit-Seal

**Japanese Cemetery  
(Nikkei No Haka)  
Upgrades**

Project  
Context Plan  
Title  
25622 0 1500 25  
Project No. Scale

**L1.0**  
Drawing No. Permit No. Revision  
A

2 of 10



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1 MATERIALS PLAN

SCALE: 1:250

NOTES

1. REFER TO GENERAL NOTES ON L0.0

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Permit-Seal  
Japanese Cemetery  
(Nikkei No Haka)  
Upgrades

Project

Context Plan

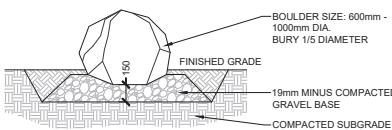
Title

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Project No. Scale

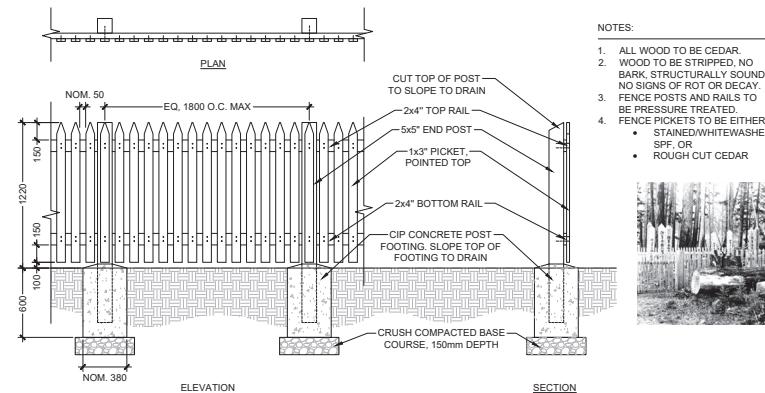
L1.1 Drawing No. Permit No. Revision

**NOTES:**

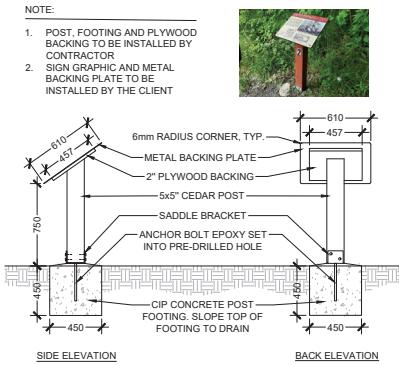
1. BOULDERS SHOULD BE SOURCED FROM SITE WHERE POSSIBLE.
2. SAMPLE PHOTOS FOR BOULDERS NOT SOURCED FROM SITE TO BE SUBMITTED TO CONTRACT ADMINISTRATOR FOR APPROVAL PRIOR TO TRANSPORT.
3. FINAL SELECTION AND ARRANGEMENT OF BOULDERS TO BE APPROVED BY CONTRACT ADMINISTRATOR.
4. BOULDERS TO HAVE NATURAL APPEARANCE, FREE OF DISFIGURING SPALLS.
5. SEE SITE PLANS FOR LOCATION AND SPACING.

**1 LANDSCAPE BOULDER**

SCALE: 1:20

**2 PICKET FENCE**

SCALE: 1:20

**3 INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE**

SCALE: 1:20

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Permit-Seal  
**Japanese Cemetery  
(Nikkei No Haka)  
Upgrades**

Project

Landscape Details

Title

25622

Project No. Scale

**L1.2**

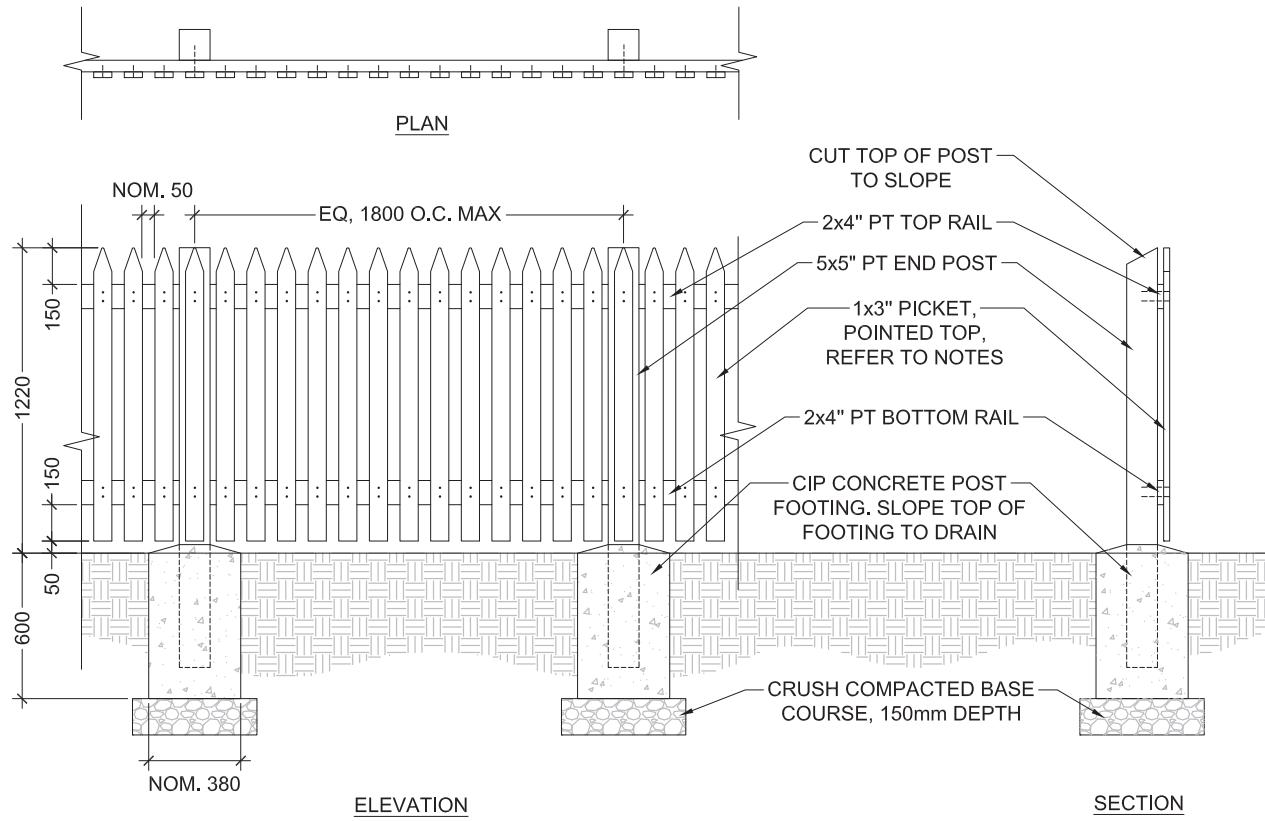
Drawing No. Permit No. Revision

# PERIMETER FENCE

The Japanese Cemetery (Nikkei No Haka) is a historic location within the Village of Cumberland. As the final resting place of approximately 198 Japanese-Canadians,<sup>1</sup> it is a sacred space currently enclosed by a painted wood picket fence.

This existing perimeter fence is a replication of an historic (early 1900s) style and design of fencing originally installed around the cemetery. Originally built in 1967 (and renewed in 1986 and 2003), this fence is now itself in need of replacement.

A new 4' height fence is proposed to be built as part of the Japanese Canadian Legacies (JCL) Projects, and will feature a reduced perimeter to align more closely with the extents of the cemetery. After removal of the existing fence, roughly 244 m (800 ft) of new fencing will be installed. To satisfy Village of Cumberland *Heritage Alteration Permit* requirements, the new fence will be designed to replicate the original (1900s) fence. The proposed detail for the new fence is shown at right, and it has been based off of historical precedent imagery (refer to next page).



## NOTES:

1. FENCE POSTS AND RAILS TO BE PRESSURE TREATED.
2. FENCE PICKETS TO BE PRICED AS:
  - OPTION 1 - STAINED/WHITEWASHED SPF
  - OPTION 2 - CEDAR

# REFERENCE IMAGES

The images below are sourced from the Cumberland Museum & Archive's *Digital Image Collection*. They show scenes from the Japanese Cemetery (Nikkei No Haka) (dated 1901 & 1929). Both images include the historic perimeter fence upon which the proposed detail has been based.



## NOTES

1. REFER TO GENERAL NOTES ON L0.0

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1 CONTEXT PLAN  
SCALE: 1:500

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Permit-Seal

No. 1 Japanese Town  
Park Upgrades

Project

Context Plan

Title

25622 0 1500 25

Project No. Scale

L1.0 Drawing No. Permit No. Revision

1 of 3

## NOTES

1. REFER TO GENERAL NOTES ON L0.0

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Schematic Design GL JO 25.11.18

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Permit-Seal  
**No. 1 Japanese Town Park Upgrades**

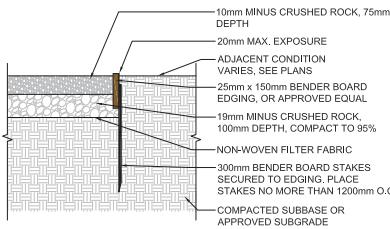
Project \_\_\_\_\_

Materials Plan

Title \_\_\_\_\_

25622 0 1200 10  
Project No. Scale

**L1.1** Drawing No. Permit No. Revision  
2 of 3



10mm MINUS CRUSHED ROCK, 75mm DEPTH  
20mm MAX. EXPOSURE  
ADJACENT CONDITION VARIES, SEE PLANS  
25mm x 150mm BENDER BOARD EDGING, OR APPROVED EQUAL  
10mm MINUS CRUSHED ROCK, 100mm DEPTH, COMPACT TO 95%  
NON-WOVEN FILTER FABRIC  
300mm BENDER BOARD STAKES SECURED TO EDGING, PLACE STAKES NO MORE THAN 1200mm O.C.  
COMPACTED SUBBASE OR APPROVED SUBGRADE

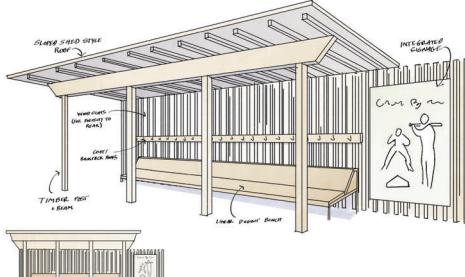
1 CRUSHED STONE PATHWAY AND EDGING  
SCALE 1:10

**OPTION 1 - TIMBER**

One option for the design of the park shelter references historical dugout structures and the timber history of Cumberland. This option uses wood as the primary design material, including subtle nods to Japanese style post and beam construction. The rear wall is composed of wood slats for porosity (to aid CPTED), and includes an integrated interpretive sign.

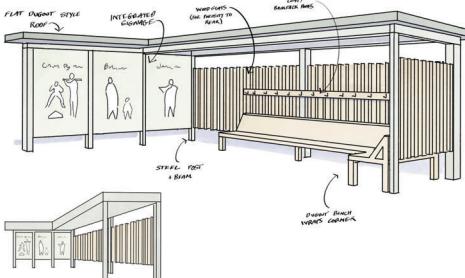


Shimen Torii  
Kasai  
Haihira  
Myojin Torii  
Dome  
Kasai  
Gakko  
Heshira  
Nenaki  
Sakura  
Sakura



**OPTION 2 - STEEL**

Another open shelter inspiration from contemporary dugout structures, and proposes to use a steel roof and beam method of construction. By playing with proportions and matching frame/balcony posts, a different style of Japanese architecture acts as a precedent. Similar to Option 1, the back wall would be composed of wood slats, and integrated interpretive signage would be placed on a secondary wing wall.

2 SHELTER & INTEGRATED INTERPRETIVE SIGN  
SCALE N/A

**PRELIMINARY**  
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

Schematic Design	GL	JG
25.11.18		
Issued		
By Appd. YY,ARMDD		
Permit Seal		
No. 1 Japanese Town Park Upgrades		
Project		
Landscape Details		
Title		
25622		
Project No. Scale		
L1.2		
Drawing No. Permit No. Revision		



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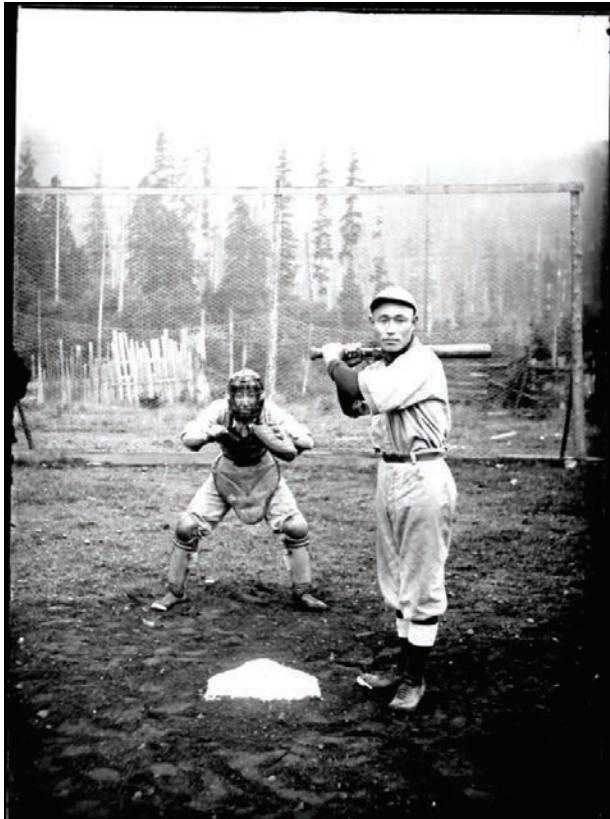
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3 of 3

# PARK SHELTER - NO.1 JAPANESE TOWN

No. 1 Japanese Town was one of the largest Japanese-Canadian communities on Vancouver Island, and featured housing and community buildings as well as recreational amenities. Baseball was a common pastime, and has inspired the design of the proposed park shelter.



Toyo Motomochi at bat, image taken at the location of the current No. 1 Town parking lot close to the proposed location of the park shelter. Date taken pre 1929 (?).

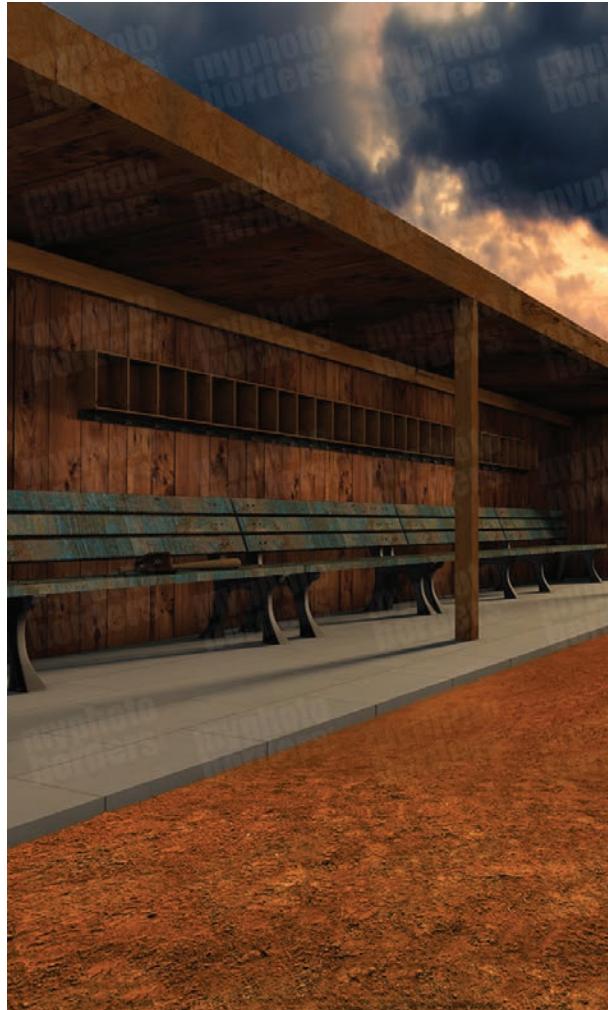
Source: Cumberland Museum & Archive's Digital Image Collection



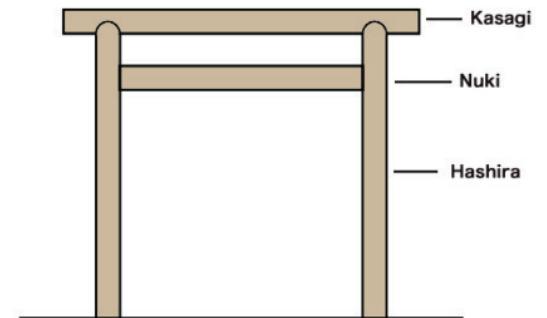
The No. 1 Townsite Baseball Team, taken in front of the Tsuroaka family home in No. 1 Japanese Town.  
Source: Cumberland Museum & Archive's Digital Image Collection

# OPTION 1 - TIMBER

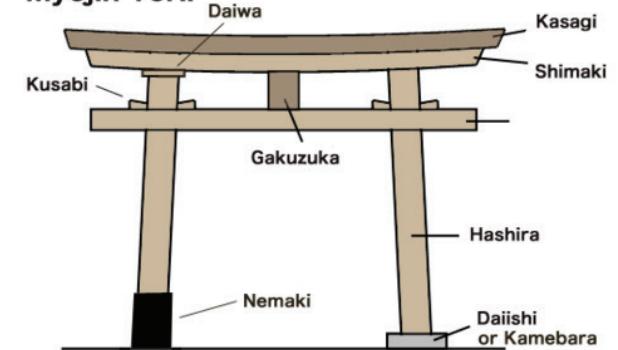
One option for the design of the park shelter references historical dugout structures and the timber history of Cumberland. This option uses wood as the primary design material, including subtle nods to Japanese style post and beam construction. The rear wall is composed of wood slats for porosity (to aid CPTED), and includes an integrated interpretive sign.

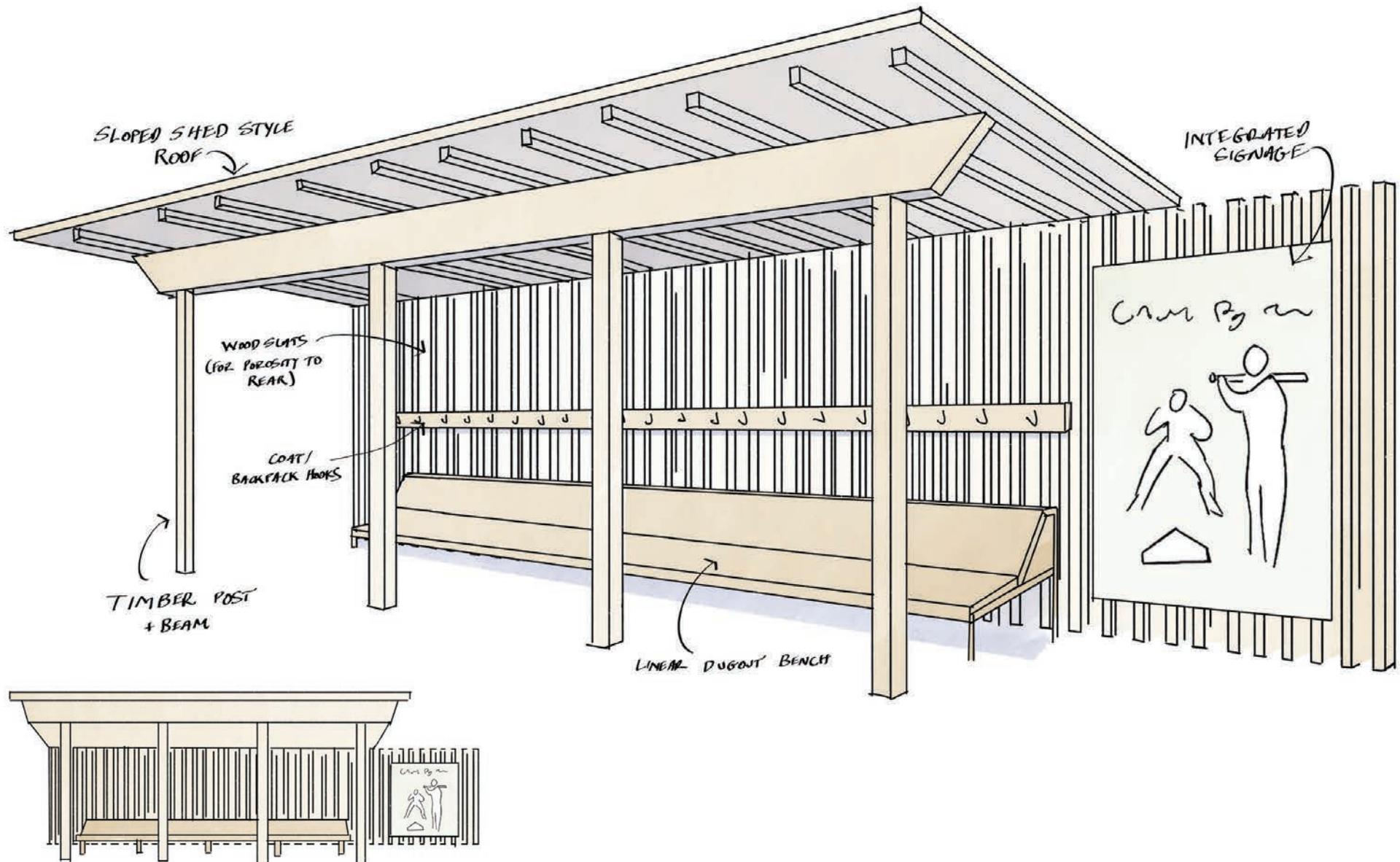


**Shinmei torii**



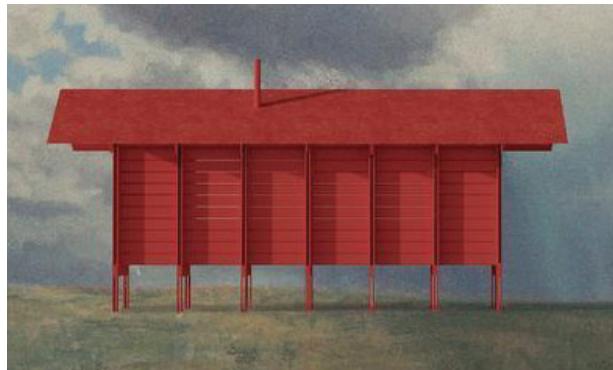
**Myōjin Torii**

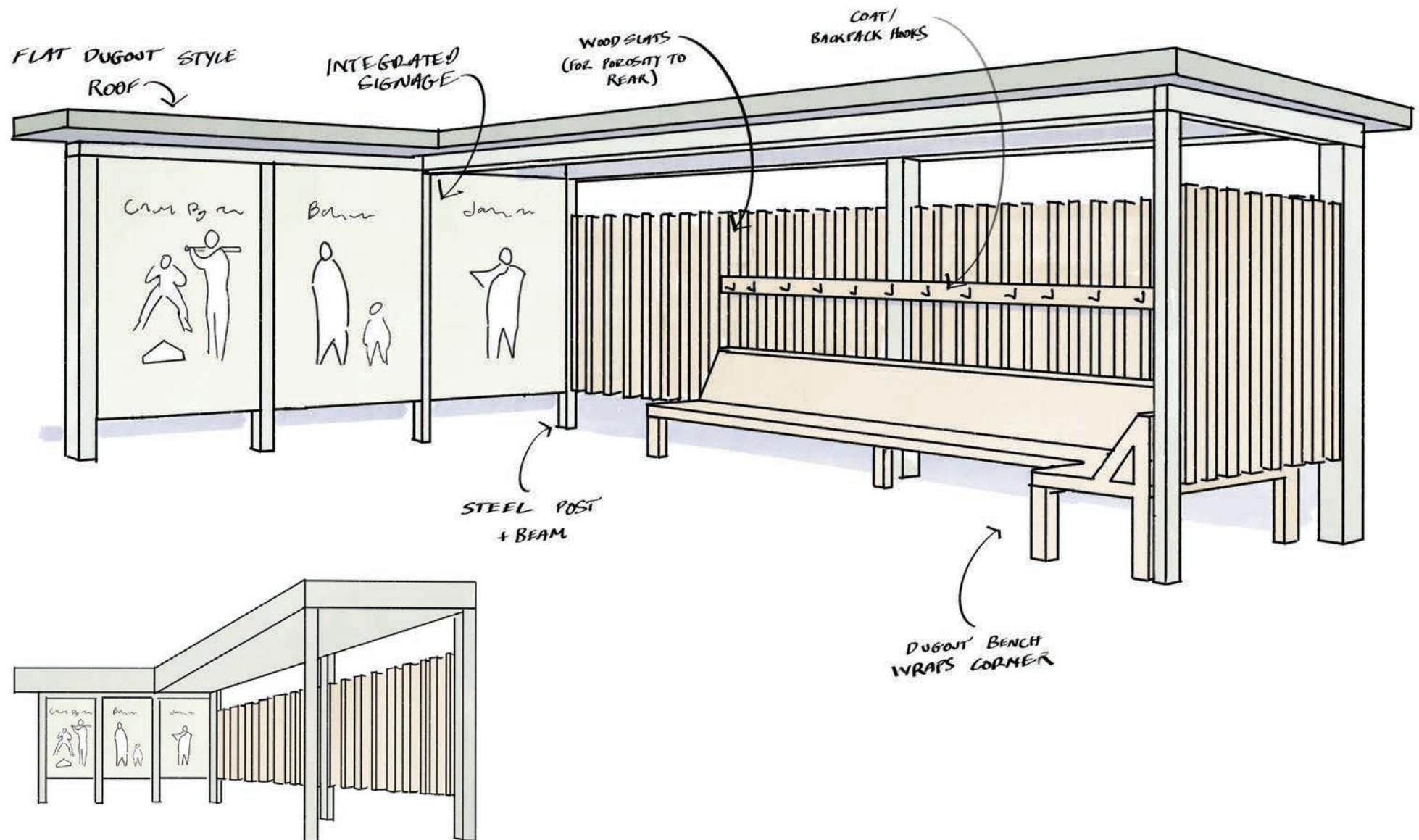




## OPTION 2 - STEEL

Another option takes inspiration from contemporary dugout structures, and proposes to use a steel roof and post method of construction. By playing with proportions and creating frames between posts, a different style of Japanese architecture acts as a precedent. Similar to Option 1, the back wall would be composed of wood slats, and integrated interpretive signage would be placed on a secondary wing wall.





# COUNCIL REPORT



REPORT DATE: November 3, 2025

MEETING DATE: January 12, 2025

File No. HAP2505

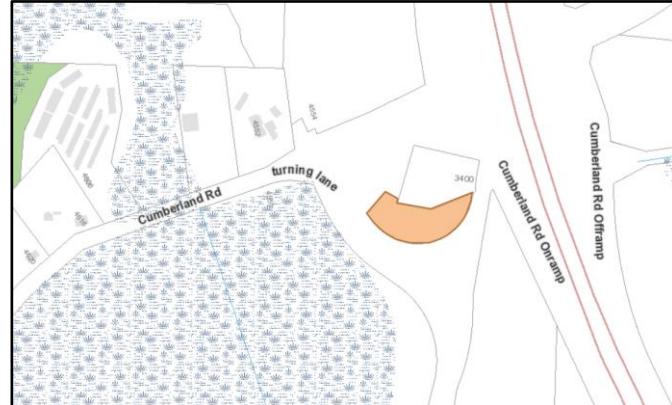
TO: Mayor and Councillors

FROM: Jasmeen Kaur Sidhu, Planning Technician

SUBJECT: Heritage Alteration Permit, Nikkei No Haka Japanese Cemetery, for Referral

## RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council refer the heritage alteration permit (HAP2505) application for the property described as Lot E Section 25, Township 10 Comox District Plan VIP65968, Except Part in Plan VIP67631 (Nikkei No Haka Japanese Cemetery) to the Heritage Committee.



*Subject Property*

The purpose of this report is to request a referral to the Heritage Committee of a heritage alteration permit (HAP) to replace the existing fence with a wooden picket fence and adjust the fence line to reflect the historic area of the cemetery as well as install new interpretive signage.

## PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

Date	Resolution
November 26, 2007	THAT "The Corporation of the Village of Cumberland Heritage Designation (Japanese Cemetery) Bylaw No. 883, 2007" be given Fourth reading and adoption.

## BACKGROUND

The Nikkei No Haka Japanese Cemetery is located on Union Road, about 1km east of the Village core and adjacent to the Chinese Cemetery about 2km west of the Cumberland Municipal Cemetery. The Japanese Cemetery is valued as the final resting place of approximately 198 Japanese-Canadian miners, mill workers, loggers, tailors, entrepreneurs and their family members

who lived in Cumberland and the Comox Valley until 1942 (See attachment 2, Statement of Significance (SoS). The Japanese cemetery is one of the three active cemeteries in the Village.

This project is one of three projects being undertaken by the Village to commemorate Japanese heritage in Cumberland. The other projects are located in Coal Creek Historic Park and Nikkei Park and do not require heritage alteration permits. Staff will also refer these other projects to the Heritage Committee input, and a Council resolution is not required.

### **Proposed Development**

A painted wooden picket fence currently encloses the cemetery parcel. The fence was initially restored in 1967 and renewed in 1986 and 2003 (See attachment 2, SoS). Now, nearly twenty-two years later, the fence has deteriorated beyond repair and requires full replacement. The Village, as the property owner, proposes to install a new wooden picket fence and to adjust the fence line to more accurately reflect the cemetery's historic boundary. The new fence line is proposed to be extended beyond the assumed 1942 fence line to include more recent burials and to accommodate any future interments.

In addition, the Village proposes to install new interpretive signage along the north boundary of the parcel placed along the walkway as visitors approach the cemetery.



***Proposed Development***

### ***Official Community Plan***

The Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 990, 2014 (OCP) designates the property as Institutional which includes non-profit or semi-public uses for the community. The proposed development does not impact the OCP designation.

### **Zoning Bylaw**

As per the Zoning Bylaw No. 1027, 2016 (Zoning Bylaw), the property is zoned as Public Assembly/Institutional Zone. The proposed development is consistent with Zoning Bylaw regulations.

### **Community Heritage Register**

The Japanese Cemetery is listed on Cumberland's Community Heritage Register. Earlier this year, the Village, in collaboration with the Heritage Committee and consultant Elana Zysblat, prepared a SoS for the cemetery. The SoS is currently pending resolution from the Heritage Committee and subsequent receipt by Council. The SoS identifies the fence as one of the site's key character-defining elements.

## Heritage Designation Bylaw

The Cemetery is designated as heritage property under Bylaw No. 883. Any alterations to the Cemetery other than those exempted in the bylaw are subject to a HAP and subject to approval of the Council.

## 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.

Village staff and its consultants will work with the Heritage Committee on design of the Coal Creek Historic Park and Nikkei Park projects, per the scope of the Terms of Reference related to the implementation of the Village's Heritage Management Plan.

## ANALYSIS

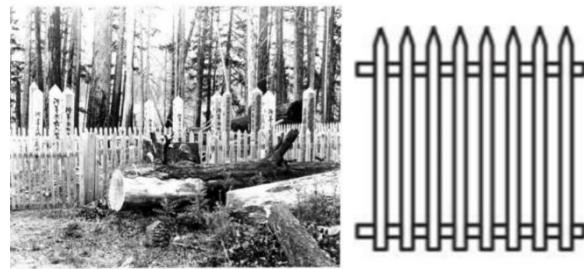
### Fence Material

The SoS identifies the painted wood picket fence surrounding the cemetery as one of its character-defining elements. The Village proposes to install a wooden picket fence designed to closely resemble the style depicted in the historic photographs included in the SoS (see Attachment 3).

### Fence Relocation

The existing fence currently extends along all sides of the property and generally follows the property lines. The Village proposes to reduce the fence perimeter for two main reasons:

First, historic photographs referenced in the SoS indicate that only a portion of the property was historically used as the cemetery. Adjusting the fence line will help reflect the cemetery's original extent more accurately.



*Fence as seen in historic pictures (source, SoS) and fence proposed*



*Cemetery as seen in historic pictures (source, SoS)*

Second, constructing a fence along the full property boundary would exceed available project funding from the Japanese Canadian Legacies program.

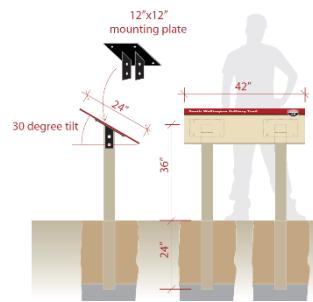
The boundary of the parcel facing the road/parking area where the fence will not be replaced is proposed to be bordered with small boulders to define the parcel boundary as well as to prevent vehicles from entering this area of the parcel.



*Reference image for boulders to be placed*

### Interpretive Signage

The Village installs interpretive signage at historic sites, trail, and other significant locations to share the history and context of these places with visitors. The proposed signs will consist of a panel featuring a photograph and a brief description and will be designed in accordance with the Village Parks and Recreation signage guidelines to ensure consistency across the community. The signage is proposed to be located along the walkway approaching the cemetery to not detract from the serenity and sacredness of the cemetery itself.



*Reference image for proposed interpretive signage*

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of the new fence and interpretive signage will be funded by the Japanese Canadian Legacies program.

## OPERATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The review of HAP applications is part of the services provided by the Development Services Department. The installation of the fencing and sign will be coordinated by the Village Community Services staff with support from consultant team funded by the Japanese Canadian Legacies funding.

## 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.*

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. Draft heritage alteration permit
2. Statement of Significance
3. Proposed Fence Detail

#### **CONCURRENCE**

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

Respectfully submitted,

***J. Sidhu***

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Jasmeen Kaur Sidhu  
Planning Technician

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Michelle Mason  
Chief Administrative Officer



## Corporation of the Village of Cumberland

## **HERITAGE ALTERATION PERMIT**

**TO: Cumberland (Village)**

## AGENT: Rachel Parker

**OF: PO BOX 340, Cumberland, BC, V0R 1S0**

1. This Heritage Alteration Permit (HAP2505) is issued subject to compliance with all of the bylaws of the Village of Cumberland applicable thereto, except as supplemented by this Permit for replacing the existing fence with new fence and adjusting the fence line to reflect the historic location of the cemetery as well as for installing new interpretive signage.
2. This Heritage Alteration Permit applies to and only to those lands within the Village of Cumberland described below:

**Legal Description:** *LOT E SECTION 25 TOWNSHIP 10 COMOX DISTRICT PLAN  
VIP65968, EXCEPT PART IN VIP67631*

**Folio:** 00526.268 **PID:** 023-888-539

**Civic Address:** Nikkei No Haka Japanese Cemetery

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

- a. Fence to be replaced with wood, picket fence as shown in *Schedule A*.
- b. Fence line to be reduced as shown on the site plan in the *Schedule A*.
- c. Interpretive sign to be installed as per *Schedule A*.

## 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**

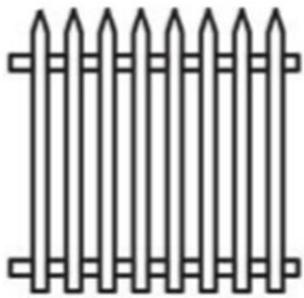
- a. *SCHEDULE A*
- 8. **Contaminated Sites Regulation**  
A site disclosure statement was not submitted as this permit does not authorize any activity likely to disturb soil on the land.
- 9. This Permit is **not** a Building Permit.

CERTIFIED as the HERITAGE ALTERATION PERMIT approved and issued by resolution of the Council of the Corporation of the Village of Cumberland on 2025-11-04

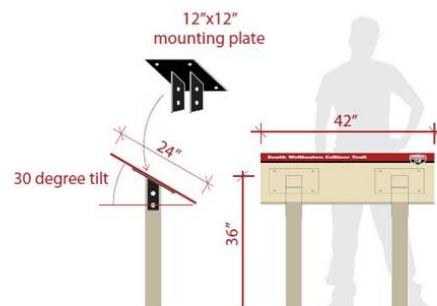
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Rachel Parker  
Corporate Officer

Schedule A



Reference graphic for proposed fence- wood, picket style



Reference graphic for proposed interpretive signage



# Statement of Significance

Nikkei No Haka Japanese Cemetery, Cumberland BC :: 1891



March 2025

## Description of Historic Place

The Nikkei No Haka Japanese Cemetery is located adjacent to the Chinese Cemetery on Union Road, about 1 km east of the Village of Cumberland and about 2 km west of the Cumberland Municipal Cemetery, in the Vancouver Island community of Cumberland, British Columbia. All three of the Village's cemeteries were designated as protected Heritage Cemeteries in 2007 and retain active cemetery status.

## Heritage Values

The Nikkei No Haka Japanese Cemetery is valued as the final resting place of approximately 198 Japanese-Canadian miners, mill workers, loggers, tailors, entrepreneurs and their family members who lived in Cumberland and the Comox Valley until 1942. Although the earliest recorded burials are from 1891, the earliest surviving headstones date from 1901, interring the 9 Japanese miners killed in the disastrous February 15, 1901 explosion at the No. 6 Mine, and the most recent interments date from 2005.

This segregated Asian cemetery, like many others on the West Coast of BC, represents the historic discriminatory policies and attitudes against residents of Asian heritage and the tragic interruption in the history of the Japanese-Canadian community in BC and Canada. Almost all of the Japanese Canadian graves in this cemetery pre-date 1942, when their forced relocation and incarceration in internment camps away from the coast occurred. It was not until April 1, 1949, that Japanese-Canadians were allowed to return to the BC Coast, although the vast majority did not go back to the communities where they came from - as over the seven years of displacement - their land, homes, possessions, and employment had been lost or forcibly sold.

This historic place provides a tangible link to the living Japanese-Canadians who can trace family history back to those relatives who were the fabric of a thriving Japanese-Canadian community in the Cumberland area, once the largest on Vancouver Island, and suffered the complete loss of home, community and place. The cemetery provides the most crucial physical testimony to the historic Japanese-Canadian community of Cumberland, as the historic Japanese neighbourhoods of Cumberland and the surrounding area were all but demolished. This historic place provides an opportunity for descendants of the Comox Valley's Japanese-Canadian community, who regard the cemetery as the symbolic cornerstone of the survival of their heritage, to visit, participate in annual ceremonies and practices, and to thank previous generations of ancestors.

The cemetery is further valued for representing the perseverance of the Japanese-Canadian families who did choose to return to BC, albeit not always to their community of origin, and for its evidence of reconciliatory gestures and projects, the first of which was initiated by the Kiwani Club of Courtenay, (in consultation with the Buddhist Church of Vancouver and funded by donations from Japanese across Canada), which in 1967 oversaw the reclamation of the

cemetery. The 59 surviving headstones that had not been desecrated or removed by anti-Japanese vandalism during WWII, were gathered together and set in a circular concrete memorial. This place, as well as the engagement opportunities in its subsequent commemoration projects and traditions, offers a space of continuity, acknowledgement and perpetuation for a segment of the Cumberland community that was persecuted, ousted and wronged. Its legal protection by the Village of Cumberland in 2007 was intended to "acknowledge the contribution made by the Japanese and to honour those who lived and worked in Cumberland from the late 1800s".

This sacred site has spiritual value, not just for the Japanese-Canadian community but for all who visit this poignant and spiritual place. This is expressed in its "good feng shui, which refers to the power of the natural environment and composite influences of natural processes. It is believed that the fortunes of a man depend, among other things, on how well his ancestors are buried with respect to geomancy (the art of divining the future for good or ill fortune)"<sup>1</sup>. The spirituality of the site is also perceived in the wooded character of the Japanese site, which has reportedly evolved since the site was active. Retention of the native trees, moss and islands of native shrubs has created a "Japanese landscape effect" evocative of the Japanese concept of wabi-sabi<sup>2</sup>. Its serenity and beauty has been noted by one of the last descendants of the Japanese community still resident in the area.

## **Character-Defining Elements**

- Historic location on Union Road, segregated (along with adjacent Chinese Cemetery) from the municipal Cumberland Cemetery.
- Continuous burial grounds for Japanese-Canadian residents of the Comox Valley since 1891
- Signs on the highway that guide to the "Japanese and Chinese Cemeteries" as opposed to previous, removed signage marked 'oriental cemetery'
- Painted wood picket fence around the cemetery (restored & expanded initially in 1967 and renewed in 1986 and 2003 - reinforcing a "sense of place" and "sacredness" as per the historic fence seen in 1940s photographs)

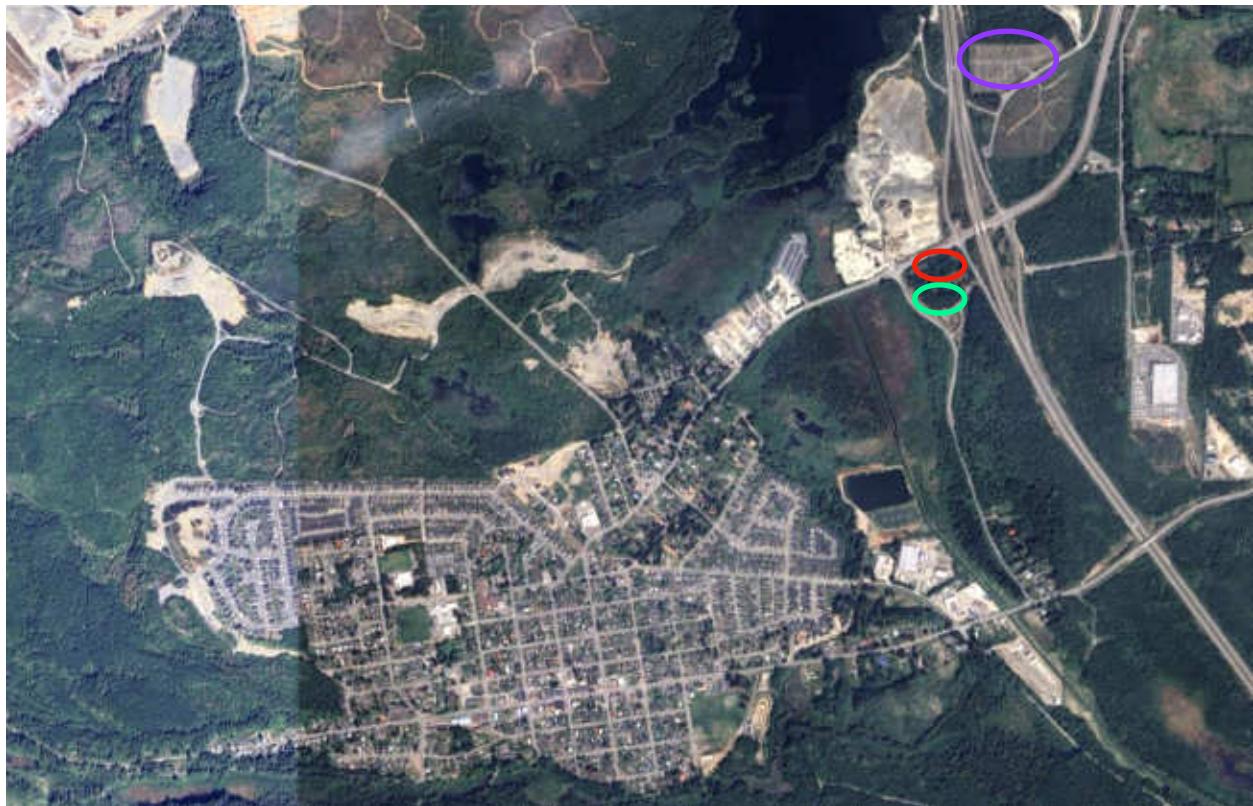
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<sup>1</sup> Quote from Bylaw No. 833, the heritage designation of the Japanese cemetery in 2007

<sup>2</sup> The Japanese aesthetic centred on the acceptance of transience and imperfection, which reveres the beauty of weathering, aging and "flawed beauty." <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wabi-sabi>

- 59 headstones recovered at the site in 1967 installed on a raised octagonal concrete memorial just inside the entry gate. Some are polished angular pillars with readable inscriptions in Japanese and English. Others are natural stones, faded and coated in moss.
- Remnants of graves throughout the historic cemetery grounds (outside the memorial installation), barely distinguishable from the forest floor, some marked with sinking stone or wood perimeters.
- Stone cairn with bronze plaque installed at the cemetery entrance on the first Miner's Memorial Day in May 1986, "in honour of the Chinese and Japanese who lived and worked in Cumberland from the late 1800's" sponsored by four Canadian industrial, mining and woodworkers' unions.
- 2008 plaque to recognize the contribution of this site to Cumberland's history and culture.
- An accessible paved walkway from the cemetery's parking lot to its 2005 main gate, and from there to the headstones memorial, funded in part by donations from Japanese-Canadian individuals and organizations in 2009 both in Canada and Japan.
- The wooded character of the site, mostly treed by towering Douglas firs and ground covered with moss.
- Nikkei No Haka wood sign with gold leaf lettering both in English and Japanese installed in 2007 (marking the 30th anniversary of the municipally organized resumption of the Obon practice in the cemetery)
- New grave markers installed in recent decades and years (the only post-WWII interments to date took place in 2005 and a new marker was installed on the communal plinth in 2013).
- Association with nearby Chinese Cemetery, another segregated community cemetery and with Coal Creek Historic Park (the former site of No. 1 Japanese Town and of Chinatown)

## Location map



Aerial map showing the Village of Cumberland and its three cemeteries circled. The Japanese Cemetery in green, the Chinese Cemetery in red and the Municipal Cemetery in purple. Credit: Google Maps



1930s aerial showing the historic surrounding road network (before the highway was built). Japanese cemetery indicated with a red arrow.

Credit: Village of Cumberland

## Current Photographs







## Archival Photos



Japanese graveyard taken by Mr. Clinton who was the US consulate. C140-375. Date: 1901.



Gathering at the Japanese cemetery by a monument to miners killed in number 6 explosion. C140-302. Date: 1901.

Source: Cumberland Museum & Archives



**Above:** Memorial service for Japanese killed in WWI for Canada. C140-003.

**Below:** Cumberland Japanese cemetery. Baseball team paying last respects to fellow player Hajime Kajiyamac. C140-375. Date: 1922. Source: Cumberland Museum & Archives





**Left:** C140-160: Japanese funeral - Tsugio Iwasa, pre 1929.

**Below:** Japanese funeral for Hirose, pre 1929. C140-109. Source: Cumberland Museum & Archives

Source: Cumberland Museum & Archives



## Research Resources

Heritage BC - Cumberland Japanese Cemetery nomination on the Japanese Canadian Historic Places Cultural Map. <https://heritagebc.ca/japanese-canadian-location/cumberland-japanese-cemetery/?lang=en>

Village of Cumberland - Coal Creek Historic Park. <https://cumberland.ca/coal-creek-historic-park/>

Village of Cumberland - Cemeteries Master Plan 2014. <https://cumberland.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Cumberland-Cemeteries-MP-Final.pdf>

Village of Cumberland Japanese Cemetery - clippings and resources file

Websites:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obon>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internment\\_of\\_Japanese\\_Canadians#cite\\_note-5](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internment_of_Japanese_Canadians#cite_note-5)

<https://iwonderandwander.ca/2020/03/28/cumberland-japanese-cemetery/>

<https://najc.ca/the-story-of-cumberland-and-royston>

<https://thecollectivemags.ca/hidden-treasures/>

## More facts about the cemetery

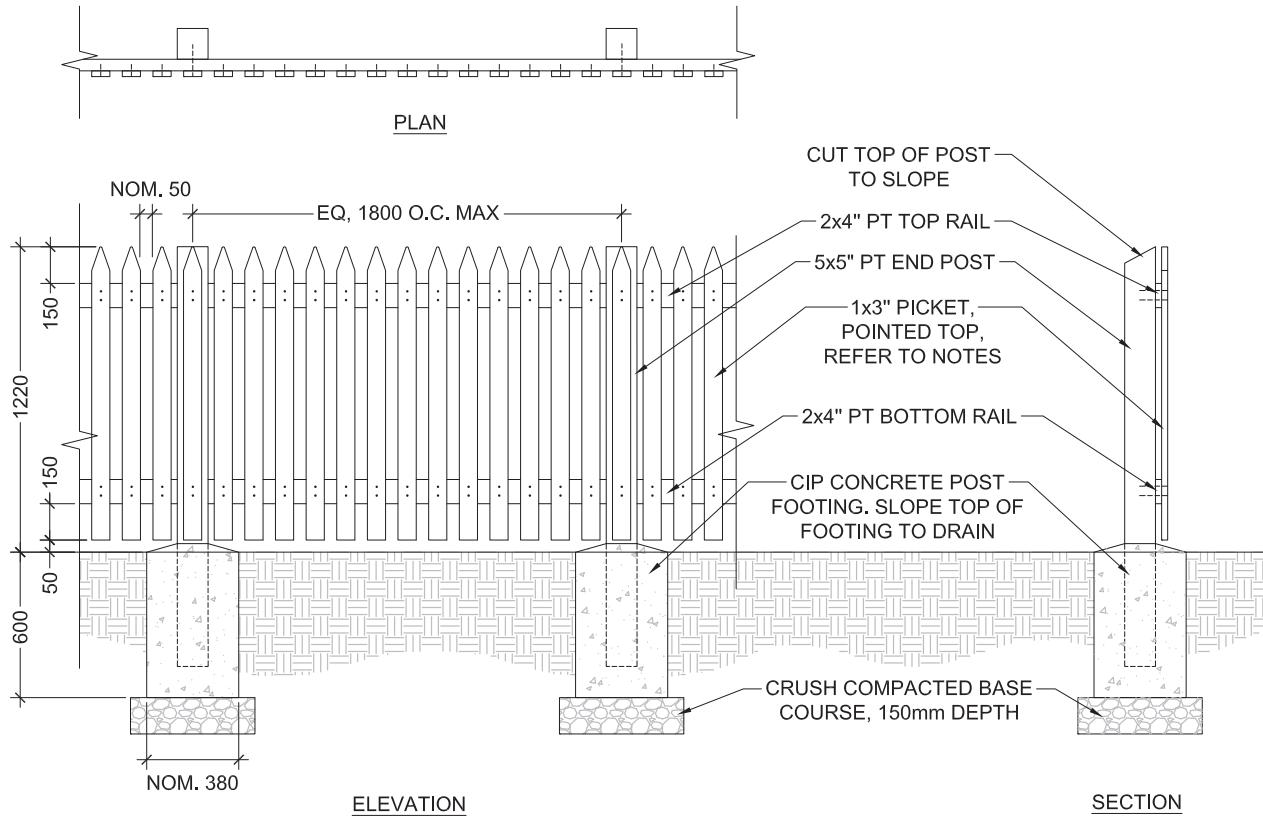
- Renovations, maintenance and added features such as the paved walkway were funded in part by donations from Japanese-Canadian individuals and organizations both in Canada and Japan
- Annual ceremonies and events that occur at the site include the Miner's Memorial Weekend in June and the practice of Japanese Obon - the ancient, Buddhist tradition of caring for ancestor's graves - a family reunion holiday during which people return to visit and clean their ancestors' graves when the spirits of ancestors are supposed to revisit the household altars. At the Cumberland Nikkei No Haka Japanese Cemetery this is practiced annually since 1977 - in mid-August. The Japanese-Canadian community in the Comox Valley area and beyond attends to the cemetery beforehand to clean up the blown down tree branches, sweep and clean the markers.

# PERIMETER FENCE

The Japanese Cemetery (Nikkei No Haka) is a historic location within the Village of Cumberland. As the final resting place of approximately 198 Japanese-Canadians,<sup>1</sup> it is a sacred space currently enclosed by a painted wood picket fence.

This existing perimeter fence is a replication of an historic (early 1900s) style and design of fencing originally installed around the cemetery. Originally built in 1967 (and renewed in 1986 and 2003), this fence is now itself in need of replacement.

A new 4' height fence is proposed to be built as part of the Japanese Canadian Legacies (JCL) Projects, and will feature a reduced perimeter to align more closely with the extents of the cemetery. After removal of the existing fence, roughly 244 m (800 ft) of new fencing will be installed. To satisfy Village of Cumberland *Heritage Alteration Permit* requirements, the new fence will be designed to replicate the original (1900s) fence. The proposed detail for the new fence is shown at right, and it has been based off of historical precedent imagery (refer to next page).



## NOTES:

1. FENCE POSTS AND RAILS TO BE PRESSURE TREATED.
2. FENCE PICKETS TO BE PRICED AS:
  - OPTION 1 - STAINED/WHITEWASHED SPF
  - OPTION 2 - CEDAR

# REFERENCE IMAGES

The images below are sourced from the Cumberland Museum & Archive's *Digital Image Collection*. They show scenes from the Japanese Cemetery (Nikkei No Haka) (dated 1901 & 1929). Both images include the historic perimeter fence upon which the proposed detail has been based.

