

New Westminster Neighbourhoods Historical Context Statements

Brow of the Hill



6th Avenue and 10th Street 1982. (NWPL 2220)

August 2016
Denise Cook Design • Birmingham & Wood



Historical contexts

Identify and explain the major themes, factors and processes that have influenced the history of a neighbourhood

Their objective is to provide a framework to investigate, identify and manage heritage resources

They are not intended to be a detailed account of all aspects of the history of a neighbourhood

They are not intended to replace histories designed to serve other purposes

Introduction

Neighbourhoods are geographically localized units of identity and cohesion within cities, characterized by the provision of basic services (church, school, park, transportation, shopping) and a sense of community among residents.

Neighbourhoods emerge, decline, disappear, strengthen, and alter their boundaries depending on a range of factors including the changing character of the municipality of which they are a part, population shifts, urban renewal, service availability, and municipal commitment to neighbourhoods' value.

By the turn of the century, New Westminster's neighbourhoods had each acquired a distinctive character. Some attributes reflected the history of the city as a whole, while others were specific to the neighbourhood. Each neighbourhood has gone through challenging times, been revitalized, and today generally possesses an identity and feeling of community among its residents.

New Westminster's neighbourhoods go back in time nearly a century and a half. Their character and physical features, important to understanding their heritage values, have emerged out of this long municipal history. A wider overall context of New Westminster's neighbourhoods is included here as Appendix A.

Historical Contexts and Thematic Frameworks

A historic context statement is a document used in planning for a community's heritage resources. It identifies the broad patterns of historic development in the community and identifies historic property types, such as buildings, sites, structures, objects, landscapes or districts which represent these patterns of development. Documenting the historical context of a place ensures that the significance of its heritage resources are understood and clearly stated.

Historical themes are succinct ways of describing a major force or process which has contributed to the history and development of a neighbourhood. Historical themes form a context of a neighbourhood's history within which the heritage significance of its characteristics and features component parts can be understood, assessed, and compared.



New Westminster: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement

Historical themes

*Locate a heritage neighbourhood
or resource historically in place
and time*

*Unite a variety of actions, events,
functions, people, place and time*

*Prevent a focus on any one
particular type of resource,
period or event in the history of a
neighbourhood*

*Ensure that a broad range of
heritage resources is considered,
touching on many aspects of the
neighbourhood's history*

*Flow across all peoples, places,
and time periods*

Historical contexts and themes are developed with community engagement and discussions about what residents find valuable about their neighbourhood. These documents support the heritage values of the neighbourhood as identified by the local community.

The historical context statement provides direction for evaluating and protecting significant heritage resources. It can be used to inform the management of the area's heritage. This includes the selection of historic and cultural sites for nomination to the Community Heritage Register. It also includes the ability to sustain the area's rich diversity of intangible cultural heritage, such as stories, festivals, celebrations, arts, sports, and other valued forms of expression and community building.

The context statement is intended to:

- Capture the heritage values of the Brow of the Hill neighbourhood and the evolution of its geographic community over time
- Capture the reader or audience's imagination
- Capture the unique character defining elements of the community and overlaps between one community and elsewhere
- Connect the past to the present
- Connect heritage values to the experience of physical surroundings

As a planning document, the neighbourhood context statement is meant to be a dynamic work, evolving as more information is uncovered and as a community's needs and desires change.

Historical photographs courtesy of the New Westminster Museum and Archives (NWMA) and the New Westminster Public Library (NWPL).



New Westminister: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement



Arnie's Grocery.



12th Street Festival.

Brow of the Hill: Summary of Values

Brow of the Hill is valued for its singularity as a neighbourhood of New Westminister, derived from its location, geography, cultural and visual diversity, working class history and association with industry in the city.

Brow of the Hill is significant for its geographical location, stretching uphill from the Fraser River and culminating the “brow,” the highest part of a hill where the ground begins to flatten out. Within this geographic scope is a neighbourhood of diversity, variety and contrast.

As one of New Westminister's earliest residential neighbourhoods, Brow of the Hill is significant for its working class history and the architecture that supported it. Early single family homes, some dating back to the 1880s, housed people who held a variety of blue collar jobs and professions, yet the area is also home to many larger dwellings of prominent New Westminister residents. As the working population grew, areas of apartments emerged and larger homes were divided into multiple dwelling units.

The result is a neighbourhood of contrasts, seen in such aspects of the place as large homes and modest apartments on 9th Street, light industrial and small-scale retail on 12th Street, a wide mix of housing ages and styles, and small corner stores dotted throughout the community. Wider thoroughfares such as 8th street are in contrast with areas of fine grain, short streets, courtyard, small lots, and heritage houses.

From an economic perspective, Brow of the Hill is notable for its ongoing light industrial uses, its existing industrial structures and the importance of retaining intact pockets of industrial heritage. Also important is the lack of large parking lots and chain stores, and the retention of locally owned stores found in original streetscapes such as 12th Street.

Social and cultural value is found in an acknowledgement that First Nations history is a missing piece of the city's history,¹ the ethnic diversity of the neighbourhood, a mix of old, young and families, and the presence of a variety of places of worship, community halls and other public buildings that reflect the cultural mix of this tight-knit

1 Comment from OCP workshops May and June 2014.



New Westminster: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement

community. Also important are the community events, such as local block parties and the 12th Street Festival, held on a street that is evolving into an edgy, modern part of the neighbourhood.

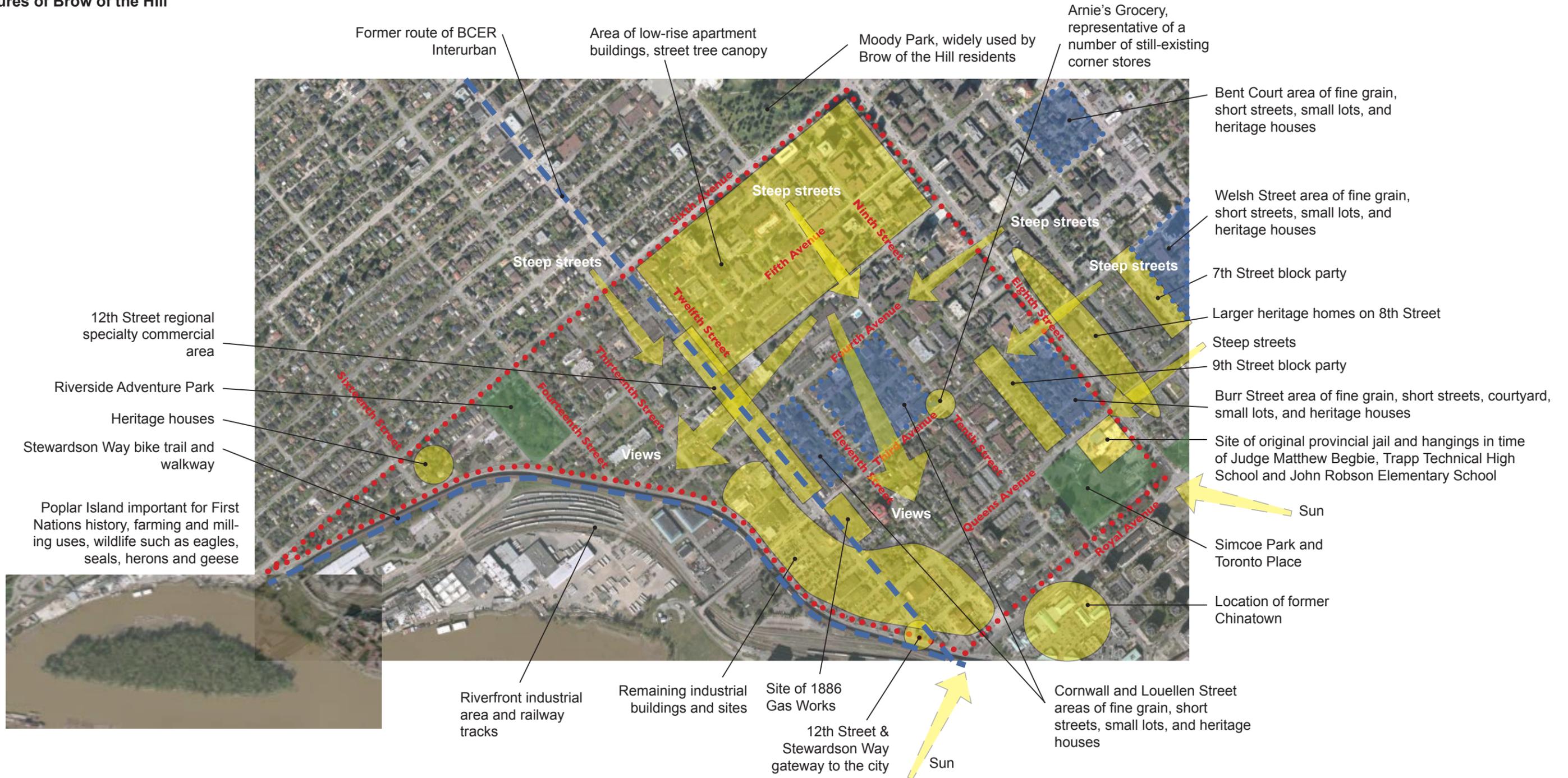
Brow of the Hill is significant for its people, for being friendly, charming and quaint, and a family friendly neighbourhood.

Landscape features are valued, including planted boulevards, front yard gardens, community gardens urban wildlife, parks and trees.





Features of Brow of the Hill





Brow of the Hill historical background

Chronology

1860 The Royal Engineers survey Brow of the Hill, superimposing a grid pattern parallel to the Fraser River on the natural topography, with streets running up the hill and avenues across it.

An Indian Reserve is established on Poplar Island, one of three in the area for the Qayqayt First Nation (New Westminster Indian Band).

1865 Douglas Road, now Eighth Street, connects Brow of the Hill to Burnaby and Hastings Townsite.

1884 The New Westminster Reserve Act transfers St. Andrews Square, originally set aside as government reserve in the Royal Engineers' survey, to the City of New Westminster, opening it up for residential development.

Initial subdivision consists of large suburban lots.

1885 The Provincial Jail at Eighth Street and Royal Avenue is constructed.

1886 A gas plant is established on the corner of 3rd Avenue and 12th Street, the first gas plant building in B.C.

1888 The North Arm Lands and Poplar Island are acquired by the City of New Westminster.

1889-90 City Council approved the establishment of waterworks in the neighbourhood, established electrical utilities and proceeded with a street improvement program.

1892 Streets were cleared and graded, and 167 dwellings were connected to water and electrical systems.

The Interurban Railway is constructed on 12th Avenue and residential, commercial and industrial development begins along the line.

Prominent local citizens construct begin to construct homes in the neighbourhood: Herbert Gilley of Gilley Bros. Building Materials and John Hendry, president of B.C. Mills Timber and Trading Co.

1893 Interurban railway tracks are constructed along Twelfth Street.



Provincial Jail 1885. BCAR a-03353.



New Westminster: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement

- 1906 Most of the remaining large parcels are subdivided into smaller building lots.
- 1907 A railway route to Marpole is opened along the current alignment of Stewardson Way.
- 1909 The Immanuel Lutheran Church is established to serve the local Swedish community.
- 1911 Fraser River Pile Driving, now Fraser River Pile and Dredge and New Westminster's oldest surviving industrial firm, begins operations.
- 1912 Commercial development begins slowly. The 10th Street Grocery is opened.
- 1913 There are a total of 606 dwellings in the neighbourhood. The Ambrose Apartments, an early mixed retail and residential block, opens on 13th Street.
- 1914-19 The industrialization of the North Arm of the Fraser River during the First World War attracts factory workers to the neighbourhood, changing the type of residences being constructed into more affordable housing.
Two shipbuilding plants are established on Poplar Island.
- 1919 The Provincial Jail is leased by the School Board and converted into the T.J. Trapp Technical School.
- 1920s Industrial uses continue to be constructed on the lands south of the neighbourhood, including Westminster Paper Company and Triangle Chemical.
- 1922 Westminster Paper, now Kruger Products, opens in the industrial area adjacent to Brow of the Hill. The main structure of the Kruger factory remains the same today as it did nearly 100 years ago.
- 1927 The subdivision of the Thomas Ovens property at 302 Eighth Street is the final division of the neighbourhood's original large lots into smaller building parcels.
- 1928 T.J. Trapp Technical School re-opens in a new building on Eighth Street near Royal Avenue.
- 1930s Increased prosperity results in new construction and infill throughout the neighbourhood. The suspension of municipal zoning bylaws results in an increase in the number of homes



New Westminster: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement

- being converted into rooming houses.
- 1938 Alaska Pine Corporation opens.
- 1940s Automotive shops and car sales lots emerge along 12th Street and the north side of Royal Avenue.
- 1950s The construction of apartment buildings begins in the neighbourhood to alleviate housing shortages. Between 50 and 100 apartment units are constructed each year.
- 1955 Trapp Tech becomes John Robson Elementary School with the opening of New Westminster Secondary School on Eighth Street.
- 1964 Apartment units make up 38% of the housing in Brow of the Hill. Stewardson Way opens, named for Alan Stewardson and his father Harry, both city engineers. The roadway separates Brow of the Hill from the industrial lands to the south.
- 1966 Official Regional Plan designates Poplar Island for industrial uses.
- 1967 A new arterial road linking Stewardson Way to Royal Avenue at 8th Street is constructed in order to buffer the neighbourhood.
- 1969 Apartment units make up 75% of the housing stock in Brow of the Hill.
- 1971 Simcoe and Riverside Parks are established.
- 1972-74 Rent controls are established in the neighbourhood leading to increasing deterioration.
- The Federal Assisted Rental Program provides capital assistance to builders and 200 apartment units are constructed under this program.
- Warehouses begin to be established in the industrial lands.
- 1977 Poplar Island is identified as an area of outstanding vegetation and wildlife character by the Lower Mainland Natural Areas Inventory.
- 1979 GVRD re-designates Poplar Island from industrial to reserve.
- 1994 The Twelfth Street Corridor Policy is established to encourage architectural and landscape design to contribute to the character of Brow of the Hill.

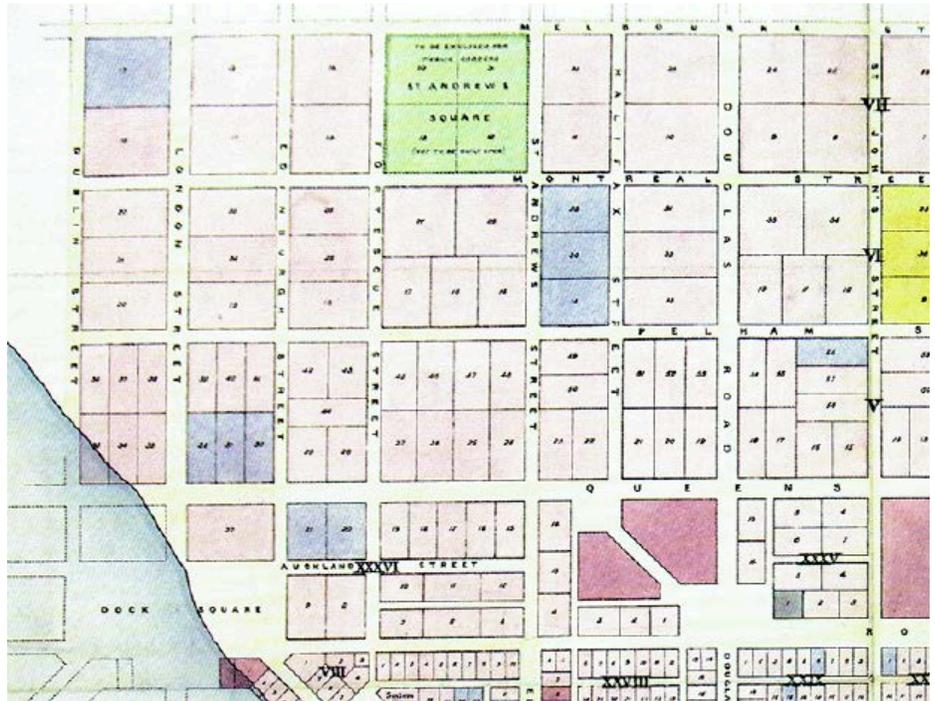


New Westminster: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement



Gas Works building.

- 1997 The 1886 Gas Works building is found to have significant historical value as one of the city's oldest remaining industrial buildings.
- 2016 The roof of the 1886 Gas Works building collapses.



Royal Engineers 1862 map showing original suburban lot survey of Brow of the Hill (Hayes 2014).

Street map of Brow of the Hill showing contours that indicate the slope of the neighbourhood towards the Fraser River.





New Westminster: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement



Vancouver Japanese Gospel Church.

Beginnings

The Brow of the Hill neighbourhood is the area located between Queen's Avenue to the south, Stewardson Way to the west, 6th Avenue to the north and 8th Street to the east. The neighbourhood is primarily residential with small pockets of light industrial and commercial use, and is characterized by its topography, with steep slopes to the west that provide significant views to the Fraser River. Streets run up the hill, and avenues across it, roughly paralleling the Fraser River.



View of part of Brow of the Hill looking down 8th Street at 6th Avenue. (NWMA IHP9563-0675)

Brow of the Hill is one of New Westminster's earliest suburban residential neighbourhoods. Colonel Moody's 1859 plan for the city earmarked this area as a neighbourhood for working class housing, spurred by the transfer of St. Andrew's Square by the city from government reserve to the city in 1884, which was a catalyst for surrounding private landowners to subdivide their land. As a result, although with some exceptions, many of the homes here tended to be smaller and at a more modest scale.

Early circulation patterns were established by roads constructed for military purposes, including Douglas Road, now 8th Street, built in 1861 to provide access to Burnaby and Hastings Townsite at Vancouver. The False Creek Trail, roughly following present-day Kingsway, led



New Westminster: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement

Some notable residents of Brow of the Hill¹

John Hendry, President, B.C. Mills
Timber and Trading Co.
Isaac Fisher, bank president
G.W. Grant, architect
Andrew Mercer, engineer
F.W. Howay, judge and historian
Elijah Fader, industrialist
Thomas Ovens, mayor, originator
of the Ancient and Honourable
Hyack Anvil Battery

¹ Councillor Jaimie McEvoy.
Historical Information, Brow of the Hill.



9th Street house built in 1902
by carpenter W.E. Mercer, 1982.
(NWMA IHP9563-0675)

off Douglas Road at 14th Avenue.¹ The BC Electric Railway was constructed along 12th Avenue in 1893, attracting more residents to the neighbourhood and establishing the location of a commercial strip, while a BCER streetcar construction facility at the foot of 12th Street provided employment.

In keeping with Moody's plan, Brow of the Hill did develop as a primarily working class neighbourhood. Early single family homes housed people who held a variety of jobs and professions, such as foundry workers, BCER trainmaster, carpenters, retail store managers, engineers, cannery workers, store clerks, bank managers, millworks owner, mariner, grocers and a piano agent.

As a reflection of its diversity, Brow of the Hill was also home to more elaborate houses and upper working class individuals particularly along 8th Street and Queens Avenue. These included city mayor and machine shop owner Thomas Ovens, judge and historian F.W. Howay, and president of B.C. Mills Timber and Trading Co. John Hendry.

Development in Brow of the Hill tended to occur in waves, depending mainly on economic activity, and based on the subdivision of the original larger suburban lots into smaller single family parcels. After an economic downturn in the 1890s, a wave of home building began in 1910, when sewers, sidewalks, curbs and paved streets were installed.

Moody's early plan defined government reserves and open parks spaces, including St. Andrews Square and Toronto Place in Brow of the Hill. The diagonal Simcoe Street let to the gardens of Toronto Place; the street was closed in as part of Simcoe Park in 1972.

Simcoe Park was a significant part of Brow of the Hill as the location of the 1886 Provincial Jail, constructed in response to activities related to the saloons and gambling dens in Downtown and Chinatown. The building then served as T.J. Trapp Technical School from 1920 until its demolition in 1955, with John Robson Elementary School constructed in 1928 originally to serve as the annex to T.J. Trapp next door.

Part of Brow of the Hill's history is in its adjacency to the industrial riverfront lands and to Chinatown, both of which reflect its working class connections and its diversity as a neighbourhood. During World War I, the Fraser River waterfront was developed as industrial land,

¹ *Brow of the Hill Heritage Walking Tour.* City of New Westminster.



New Westminster: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement



Skybolt Apartemnts on St. Andrews
Street 1963.
(NWMA IHP10001-0978)



TJ Trapp Technical School c.1920.
(NWMA IHP1530)

with industries such as Pacific White Pine sawmills, New Westminster Paper, Rayonier, Pacific Coast Terminals and many others establishing facilities there. Workers wishing to live near their employment were attracted to Brow of the Hill, influencing a change from early larger homes in some areas to more working-class housing overall.

A second peak of residential development occurred during the interwar period of 1925-1945 when the neighbourhood population reached up to 2000. During World War II, industrial activity and residential development both increased dramatically, and many of the older, larger homes were converted into suites and boarding houses.



12th Street.



Aerial view of Stewardson Way showing Brow of the Hill and industrial activity, no date.
(NWPL 1679)



New Westminster: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement

Challenging Times

During the 1950s, changes in New Westminster's work force was in part responsible for the need for more local housing and the construction of mostly three-storey wood framed apartment buildings in the neighbourhood. By 1964, two-thirds of Brow of the Hill dwelling units were apartments. This changed the character of many parts of the place, but added another layer to the diversity of its buildings and people.

Brow of the Hill continued to be impacted by larger capital projects. Construction of Stewardson Way in 1966 defined the western edge of the neighbourhood but created an influx of traffic. As a result, a new arterial road linking Stewardson Way to Royal Avenue at 8th Street was constructed to provide a buffer for the neighbourhood.

Development in the 1980s consisted of high-rise and multi-family developments south the 3rd Avenue, with river views and access to shopping and the newly opened Skytrain.



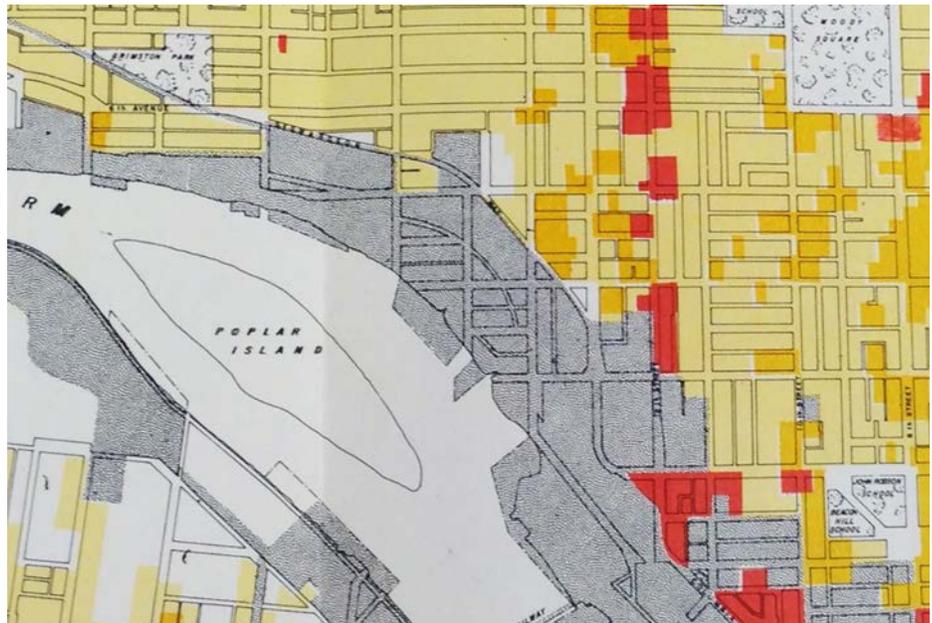
12th Street commercial area.



Aerial view of Brow of the Hill 1946. (Vintage Air Photos)



New Westminster: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement



RESIDENTIAL	
	LOW DENSITY..... One And Two Family Houses.
	MEDIUM DENSITY..... Apartments, Conversions.
	HIGH DENSITY..... Apartments, Six Storeys Or More.
COMMERCIAL	
	RETAIL, OFFICE AND SERVICE.
INDUSTRIAL	
	MANUFACTURING, RAIL AND HARBOUR.
INSTITUTIONAL	
	PARK, SCHOOL, GOVERNMENT, AND OPEN SPACE
	VACANT

Brow of the Hill land uses in 1960 showing mixed density housing, commercial development on 12th Street and industrial use below Stewardson Way. (Urban Renewal Study part 3)

Revitalization

An Urban Renewal Study undertaken by the city's Planning Department in 1965 divided the city into nineteen areas requiring further examination. In this study, Brow of the Hill was generally identified as part of areas 6 and 7, Stewardson Way and Apartment area.

The Stewardson Way area was identified as having a clash of industrial and residential uses, with problems relating to air pollution, noise, traffic and parking. Re-organization of land uses and improvements to municipal services was called for. The Apartment area needed improved services, street capacity and other facilities based on the



New Westminster: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement



IHP10355-001 Valley Lumber Yard
Royal Ave c.1950.

Identified heritage resources in
Brow of the Hill.
(City of New Westminster)



Duplexes at 3rd Avenue and 10th
Street 2015.



The 1993 Heritage Management Plan listed the following issues and opportunities as identified by community members:

- The intentional neglect and depreciation of properties so that homeowners or developers can built speculative housing
- Increasing numbers of demolitions of older homes is changing the character of the neighbourhood
- It is important to retain clusters of significant heritage buildings and



New Westminster: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement



other resources

- The conservation of resources from all eras should be promoted

As of 2006, Brow of the Hill had a population of 9,520. The average family income of the neighbourhood's residents was \$37,842. Given the high number of apartment units - 88% of total housing - it is not surprising that there is high level of rental accommodation and 45% of residents living alone. Brow of the Hill has a lower household income generally. The highest age group is age 35 to 49, and almost 17% live and work in New Westminster.¹

Brow of the Hill is a multi-cultural and diverse neighbourhood of recent immigrants from a wide range of countries, with Philippines, China and Romania being the current most recent source countries.

Today, Brow of the Hill has been noted for its revitalizing energy and opportunity, with houses throughout the neighbourhood being renovated and rehabilitated. Residents value the diversity of the population, the short streets and named lanes showing early development patterns and the neighbourhood's working class history seen in the architecture that supported it.

Streets and streetscapes matter, including 12th Street between Sixth Avenue and Columbia Street as a commercial corridor. Brow of the Hill is evolving into an edgy neighbourhood with local, non-commercial stores, an eclectic arts community, photography studios, tattoo parlours and music stores. Local grocers, old style barbers, cafes and other small businesses line the street. The local restaurants reflect the cultural diversity of the neighbourhood, with authentic Mexican, Filipino, Chinese, Arabic and South Asian cuisine.

Brow of the Hill has remained a primarily residential, working class neighbourhood for most of its history. Conversations with residents and recent oral histories note the blue-collar roots of the place, modest family homes, and fathers working as a dump truck drivers and at industrial plants such as Fraser Mills. The working river and the still-industrial nature of parts of the neighbourhood continue to reflect for residents the significant working class history of Brow of the Hill.

1 Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Profile, City of New Westminster



New Westminster: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement

Brow of the Hill

Friendly, charming,
convenient, diverse

Walkable, unique, pet-friendly,
in transition

Local councilor, vintage, family
oriented, close, neighbourly



Current perceptions from within the neighbourhood

In order to understand what the community valued or was concerned about in their neighbourhood, a workshop session was held with the Brow of the Hill Residents' Association in May 2015. The following questions were used to stimulate discussions about neighbourhood value and character:

- What the Heritage of Brow of the Hill? Why is it important?
- What are some of the important features of Brow of the Hill? Why are they important? Where are they located?
- What are some of the big stories or historical themes of the neighbourhood?
- What words best describe your neighbourhood?
- What are your concerns about changes to the neighbourhood?

The heritage of Brow of the Hill is its collection of older houses with their significant architecture, some dating back to late 1880's and early 1900's. It was felt to be important to retain these buildings so the past can be remembered and people can see where they've come from. As well as the older houses, residents appreciate that there is mixed houses of different ages: pre and post-war houses, apartments. They see in their neighbourhood its working class history and the architecture that supported it.

Brow of the Hill is a working class, multi-cultural neighbourhood with lots of families and an ethnically diverse population with a mix of old and young. The location of Chinatown on Royal Avenue and Hawaiian connections were mentioned as historical aspects of ethnicity. Low income seniors provide stability.

The place is important for its people, for being friendly, charming and quaint, a family friendly neighbourhood.

The mix of land uses and housing types and styles found in the neighbourhood are important - single family houses, apartments, walk-ups, larger homes on 8th and Queens avenues, and quirky cottages.

While density increased in Brow of the Hill post-World War II, areas of still-existing low density single family houses with land around them are considered part of its character. Some low density areas with gardens and single-family dwellings. The early neighbourhood is seen as a microcosm of the city.



New Westminster: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement



Urban design aspects of the place include its walkability and being close to work, school, the high school and the library. There is an equidistant connection between Downtown and Uptown. Calm streets and the quietness of the neighbourhood is appreciated. Place names, short streets and named lanes show early development patterns, and every street is different and has its own particular character. Residents see neighbours when out on walks.



Old corner stores, such as the Rainbow, Rex's and Arnie's merited considerable mention. Commercial aspects such as pubs and restaurants, and filming locations for the movie and television industries are considered important.

Landscape features are important, including planted boulevards, front yard gardens and the beginnings of community gardens and urban wildlife. Mentioned particularly were trees: cherry trees (especially on 13th Street) cottonwoods, oaks, horse chestnuts, dogwood, magnolias.

Parks and open space are appreciated by residents, including Moody Park (widely used by Brow of the Hill residents) Simcoe Park, Riverside Park, Toronto Place Park and gardens, green spaces and boulevards and the bike path and walkway along Stewardson Way. The closeness of and access to the Fraser River from 3rd Street and 10th Street of the neighbourhood were mentioned, as were views to the Fraser River and Poplar Island.

12th Street is very significant to the community. The small shops on are important for local shopping, establishing the character of the street, and attracting people from out of town. The 12th Street trolley, barbershops, hairdressers, ethnic foods, Amelia's diner and the Twelfth Street Music Festival were aspects that were mentioned.

Residents appreciate the original working class, blue collar aspects of the neighbourhood, home of CP Rail, Fraser River industries, and engineers, and this shows in the pioneer homes. The industrial heritage of Brow of the Hill was mentioned. Residents value existing industrial structures at the edges of the community and wish to keep intact pockets of industrial heritage. Warehouse and industrial buildings and sites could be fixed up, preserved, re-used or made into parks or open space.

The Gasworks building was identified as both a heritage asset to be



New Westminster: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement



protected and a liability, a place that has more potential as a site for redevelopment and revitalization.

Brow of the Hill was described as being “a miniature time warp,” with an old small town feeling and “laundry on the line.” It is appreciated for being diverse and “not cookie cutter.” Some families have been here for many years.

Clean air, access to sun, prevailing winds from the river cooling the neighbourhood at night and the potential sustainability of the place are some of the natural features that were mentioned.

Streets such as Kennedy, Cornwall and Mowat streets create the feeling of another time and place. There is the opportunity to use sweat equity to fix up affordable older houses.

Institutions past and present are significant to the community, and include Trapp Technical High School, John Robson Elementary School, and churches were specifically identified.

Neighbourhood events were identified as being important, including the Twelfth Street Music Festival, Jane’s Walk, Century House events and block parties on 9th Street between Queens and 3rd Avenue.

Neighbourhood concerns identified included the following:

- High density building is replacing older homes
- Trees are being cut down
- Traffic is increasing creating noise and loss of air quality.
- There are many “reno-victions” in the area, so it is becoming less affordable for families
- There is a loss of green space
- There is an increasingly transient type of resident including students and renters who don’t have as strong a commitment to the community and which can impact neighbourhood stability

Attendees made several suggestions for neighbourhood connections and community understanding, such as the following:

- Develop interpretation along 12th Street and at the corner of 5th Avenue and 11th Street
- Support for festivals along 12th Street
- The foot of 12th Street at the corner of Stewardson Way is a gateway to the city and should have an industrial-themed park or sculpture to mark it



New Westminster: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement



Brow of the Hill Thematic Framework

Suburban development

- Early settlement as an original suburban residential area
- Initial development during the City's boom years around 1912
- Provision of affordable and worker's housing
- Diverse building styles and sizes

Cultural diversity

- Working class neighbourhood
- Multi-cultural population
- Adjacent to original Chinatown

Post WWII transformation

- Conversion of existing houses into multi-family residences
- Construction of apartment buildings

Industrial influences

- Continuing pockets of light industrial activity
- Location of the neighbourhood adjacent to the industrial activity on the Fraser River

Neighbourhood Features

Landscape features describe the particular physical attributes of a neighbourhood and, combined with identified heritage values, are a concise way of understanding Brow of the Hill's significance and character.

Natural Systems and Features

- Fraser River foreshore

Spatial Organization

- Street access to riverfront
- Well-defined street grid
- Areas of short streets, dead ends, courtyards, back lanes
- Stewardson Way creating an edge between the neighbourhood and the riverfront industrial lands

Land Use

- Commercial land uses such as businesses along 12th Street
- Still-existing corner stores scattered throughout the neighbourhood
- Residential land use in a variety of housing forms and scales



New Westminster: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement

- Light industrial land uses in the southwest part of the neighbourhood

Cultural Traditions

- Multi-ethnic population, ways of life, restaurants
- Community festivals such as the 12th Street Festival
- A variety of churches and places of worship

Circulation

- Adaptation of street grid to the steep slopes
- Streetscapes such as 12th Street
- Stewardson Way as major thoroughfare
- 8th Street formerly early Douglas Road

Topography

- Steep topography sloping towards the Fraser River and rising to a plateau to the east

Vegetation

- Street trees and treed courtyards
- Front yards and gardens
- Green park spaces such as Simcoe and Riverside parks
- Wooded landscape of Poplar Island

Buildings and Structures

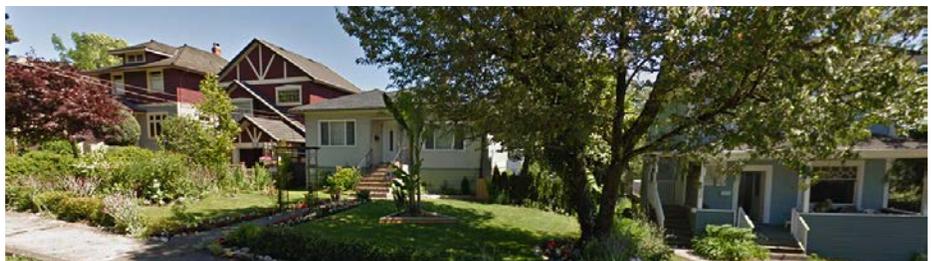
- Pockets of commercial and retail businesses
- Larger, elaborate homes, modest worker's housing,
- Grade changes across streets using cut and fill to provide level building lots for houses and businesses

Views and Vistas

- Many view corridors to the Fraser River

Water Features

- Access to the Fraser River





New Westminster: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement

Selected References

- Barman, Jean (2007). *The West beyond the West: A History of British Columbia*. 3rd ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Ewert, Henry (1986). *The Story of the B.C. Electric Railway Company*. North Vancouver: Whitecap.
- Hainsworth, Gavin and Katherine Freund-Hainsworth (2005). *A New Westminster Album: Glimpses of the City As It Was*. Toronto: Dundurn.
- Hayes, Derek. *British Columbia: A New Historical Atlas*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2013.
- Laing, F.W. (1939) *Colonial Farm Settlers on the Mainland of British Columbia 1858-1871*. Victoria: typescript at UBC Special Collections and in BC Archives.
- Mather, Barry and Margaret McDonald (1958). *New Westminster: The Royal City*. New Westminster: J.M. Dent and Corporation of the City of New Westminster.
- Councillor Jaimie McEvoy. Historical Information on Brow of the Hill. New Westminster (1965). *Urban Renewal Study. Part One: Identification of General Problems*. New Westminster: City of New Westminster, Planning Department.
- New Westminster (1986). *New Westminster Heritage Inventory Volume 3*.
- New Westminster (1993). *New Westminster Heritage Management Study Prepared for the City of New Westminster and Appendices*. http://www.newwestcity.ca/cityhall/dev_services/publications/06Heritage/pdf/Heritage%20Management%20Plan%20-%20Nov%201993.pdf
- New Westminster (1998). *New Westminster Official Community Plan*. Online at http://www.newwestcity.ca/cityhall/dev_services/development/ocp/index.htm
- New Westminster (2008a). *City of New Westminster Neighbourhood Profiles*. City of New Westminster Development Services. Online at http://www.newwestcity.ca/cityhall/dev_services/neighbourhood_planning/neighbourhood_stats/neighbourhood_profile.htm#
- New Westminster (2008b). *City of New Westminster Designated Heritage Sites*. City of New Westminster Development Services. Online



New Westminister: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement

at http://www.newwestcity.ca/cityhall/dev_services/neighbourhood_planning/Heritage/designated_sites/designated_sites_main.htm

New Westminister (2008c). Residents' Associations. Online at http://www.newwestcity.ca/cityhall/Leg_Info/Communications/residents_association/index.htm

New Westminister Public Library (2008). Heritage and Local History. Including timeline based on text provided by Archie Miller. Online at <http://www.nwheritage.org/>

The Preservationist: The Newsletter of the New Westminister Heritage Preservation Society. New Westminister: The Society, 1992-present. Online at <http://www.newwestheritage.org/newsletter.html>

Oral history interview with Gary Pooni. February 28, 2014. New Westminister Museum and Archives.

Scott, Jack David (1985). *Once in the Royal City: The Heritage of New Westminister*. North Vancouver: Whitecap.

Taylor, W.A. (1975). *Crown Lands: A History of Survey Systems*. Victoria: Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks.

We are the Qayqayt. 7squaremiles.wordpress.com/2011/02/12/

Wolf, Jim (2007). *A History of New Westminister's Park Sites and Facilities*. City of New Westminister Parks and Recreation Department.

Wolf, Jim (2005). *Royal City: A Photographic History of New Westminister 1858-1960*. Surrey: Heritage House.

Wolf, Jim and Patricia Owen (2008). *Yi Fao, Speaking Through Memory: A History of New Westminister's Chinese Community 1858-1980*. Surrey: Heritage House.

Woodland, Alan (1973). *New Westminister: The Early Years 1858-1898*. New Westminister: Nunaga.



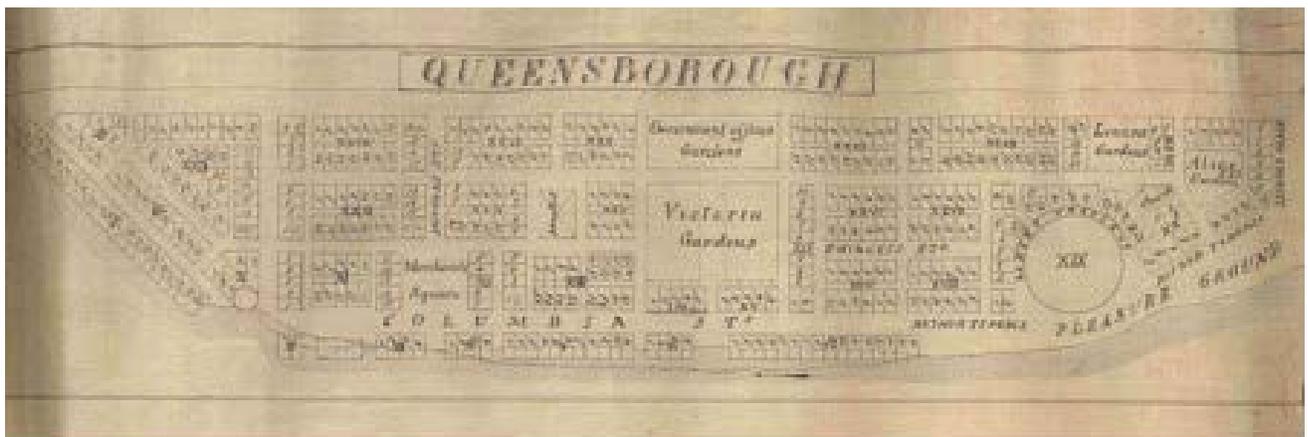
Appendix A

Overall context for New Westminster's neighbourhoods through time

Long before the first settlers made their way to New Westminster during the gold rush that broke out on the Fraser River in 1858, the area to which they came had been home to the Kwantlen people and an important food gathering site.

The influx of thousands of miners caused Great Britain to declare a mainland colony named British Columbia and to dispatch the Columbia Detachment of Royal Engineers to provide protection and construct infrastructure. Headed by Colonel Richard Clement Moody, the Royal Engineers arrived in late 1858.

Moody decided virtually from his first sight of present day New Westminster on January 5, 1859, that it should, for defensive reasons, become the colonial capital, replacing the initial choice of Derby near Fort Langley further up the Fraser River. Water was the principal means of transportation at the time, and the entry to the gold fields needed to be secured from possible attack by the United States just to the south. On February 14, Moody named the site Brow of the Hill in honour of Queen Victoria, who shortly thereafter expressed a preference for its being called New Westminster.



Map 1. Royal Engineers' plan for New Westminster

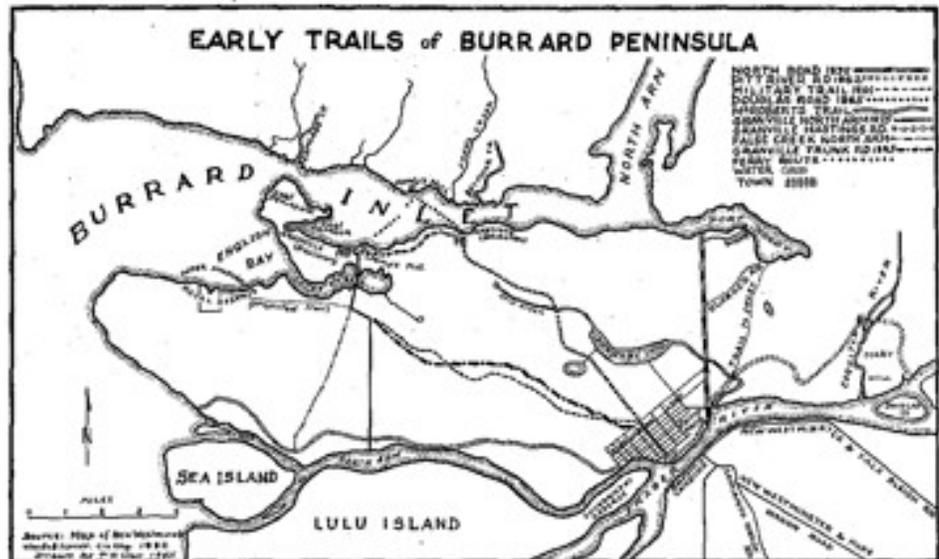
From <http://www.nwpr.bc.ca/parks%20web%20page/pictures/Map%20from%20NWMA%20collection%20web>.



New Westminster: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement

New Westminster was from its beginnings a planned city. The Royal Engineers set up camp just to the east at Sapperton, named for the men of the Royal Engineers who were called sappers. From there they laid out roads, squares and public places, land reserves, and parks. Albert Crescent, distinguished by its Fraser River views, was intended to be the fashionable neighbourhood, its residences abutting a circular Victorian-style park named Albert Crescent after Queen Victoria's husband. Before being recalled to Britain in 1863, the Royal Engineers also laid out much of the outlying region that would later be incorporated into New Westminster and cut a trail from the new capital to Burrard Inlet, the present day Kingsway.

On July 17, 1860, New Westminster was incorporated as a city, the first west of Ontario.



Map 2. Early New Westminster within its regional context
From <http://www.royalengineers.ca/earlytrails.gif> from original in BC Historical Quarterly, Oct 1945.



New Westminster: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement

New Westminster's good times as a colonial capital and jumping-off point for miners occasioned a number of large residences. The home constructed by Fraser riverboat captain William Irving on Royal Avenue in 1865 would be purchased by the city in 1950 to become part of the New Westminster Museum and Archives. The City established the first public school in 1865 and the Royal Columbian Hospital in 1862. The Sisters of St. Ann founded St. Ann's convent in 1864.

The decline of the gold rush in the mid-1860s caused New Westminster's fortunes to ebb. The earlier colony of Vancouver Island with its capital at Victoria was absorbed into the mainland colony in 1866. To pacify Vancouver Islanders, the joint colony's capital was put at Victoria, denying New Westminster the status on which its ambitious city layout was premised.

The capital remained at Victoria on British Columbia's joining the Canadian Confederation in 1871. With the loss of the capital and its employment, the city's population declined. New Westminster did not entirely lose out however, gaining both a new penitentiary built with federal funds and a provincial hospital for the insane, renamed Woodlands School in 1950. Opened in 1878, the pair were constructed respectively on the site of the former Royal Engineers' camp of Sapperton and on an intended pleasure ground located between Albert Crescent and the Fraser River. In the same year, John Hendry founded Royal City Planing Mills on the New Westminster waterfront.

As a condition of British Columbia entering the Canadian Confederation, the Dominion government committed to building a transcontinental rail line. Once it was known the Canadian Pacific Railway would locate its western terminus on Burrard Inlet, bringing the city of Vancouver into being, New Westminster sought a branch line. To raise the funds needed for a \$70,000 construction bonus to the railway, the city council requested from the provincial government title to the land reserves laid out by the Royal Engineers for parks and squares. Victoria Gardens, St. Patrick's Square, Clinton Place Reserve,



New Westminster: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement

Merchant's Square, St. George's Square, Alice Gardens, Louisa Gardens and St. Andrew's Square were then subdivided into lots and put up for auction. While the action eroded the planned city put in place by the Royal Engineers, it encouraged new settlement. In anticipation of the arrival of the railway, new investment was made in the City.

The completion of the CPR branch line to New Westminster in August 1886 launched a second major period of growth. The branch line left the main line to Vancouver at the future Port Coquitlam and followed the riverfront Downtown on the south side of Front Street to a station at the corner of Columbia and 8th Street, transforming New Westminster into the metropolis for the agricultural Fraser Valley. Warehouses and manufacturing expanded, especially along the waterfront, not far from where many of the men, brought from China to help build the transcontinental line and then left to their own devices, made their homes.

Hundreds of new homes were built in the six years from 1886 to 1892. New investment in institutional buildings responded to the growth in population. In 1886 the Sisters of Providence opened St. Mary's hospital in the downtown. In 1889, a new Royal Columbian Hospital was built in Sapperton. The Central School was expanded on new schools built in Sapperton and the West End.

A commercial building boom took place, with beautiful three and four storey brick retail and office buildings being put up on Columbia Street. The City took a strong lead in providing infrastructure. A dam was placed across Lake Coquitlam and water supplied to the City and the surrounding municipalities. An electric generating plant was built to supply electricity to the City. Roads were opened and macadamized. In 1892, the City created a city market on the waterfront, a place for farms in surrounding municipalities to buy and sell produce.

New Westminster's boundaries expanded. In 1888-89 the city acquired the suburban blocks laid out by the Royal Engineers, including Sapperton and a former military reserve on the tip of Lulu



New Westminster: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement

Island, named Brow of the Hill. The Westminster Street Railway Company was inaugurated in 1890 to connect the downtown with city neighbourhoods. The next year a line constructed by the British Columbia Electric Railway Company linked New Westminster to rapidly growing Vancouver, whose nearly 14,000 residents were double those of New Westminster. Other lines followed. In 1892 the next door city of Burnaby was incorporated, confirming New Westminster's northern boundary at 10th Avenue.

Investors were spurred to purchase land and entrepreneurs to construct elegant new homes, many of them near the large Queen's Park laid out by the Royal Engineers and now sporting public gardens and an exhibition building. In 1892 provincial legislature incorporated Columbian Methodist College as the province's first post-secondary institution, being opened the next year near Queen's Park. Families of more modest means opted for newer neighborhoods like the West End with its fine views over the Fraser River.

New Westminster's growth, curtailed by a worldwide recession beginning in 1892, was about to renew itself when a fire centering on the downtown destroyed a third of the city on September 10-11, 1898. One estimate has almost half the population left homeless.

Good economic times based in lumbering, fishing, and agriculture facilitated rapid rebuilding. The face of the city altered as many rebuilt further from the downtown, along the new streetcar lines.

While Queen's Park continued to be the favoured residential neighbourhood, the West End, Sapperton, Brow of the Hill, and the area around Moody Park, among the locations surveyed by the Royal Engineers, acquired more homes and also commercial and public buildings. New Westminster's population doubled over the first decade of the new century to 13,000 and upwards to 14,000 at the height of the boom.

New Westminster again expanded during the buoyant 1920s before



New Westminster: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement

being humbled by the Great Depression. Increased industry along the waterfront pushed the remaining upper-class residents in Albert Crescent northward to Queen's Park. In 1929, New Westminster became a major port with the construction of Pacific Coast Terminals. Over 600 new homes, many of them bungalows, were constructed across New Westminster before 1929, when the depression hit. Many vacant houses in good condition that then reverted to the city for non-payment of property taxes, some of them architecturally significant, were torn down. Other large homes were converted to rooming houses.

Newer neighborhoods expanded during the depression years as mostly modest homes went up. The West End grew to some 5,000 residents, resulting in the construction of an elementary school in 1936. Brow of the Hill, which shifted from farming to a multi-ethnic residential community, acquired a larger school. Moody Park got playgrounds and sport facilities, including a clubhouse. The city negotiated with the British Columbia Electric Railway Company to provide buses to emerging neighbourhoods, which began running in December 1938. The first was a cross-town bus connecting the West End with downtown, resulting in the corner of 8th Avenue and 12th Street becoming an important junction for shoppers. New Westminster's population grew from 17,500 in 1931 to 22,000 a decade later.

New Westminster thrived during the good times following the Second World War. The City Council hired well known American planner Harland Bartholomew to create a new city plan. Produced in 1945-47, it advocated New Westminster becoming a more urban place through apartment development in the eastern end of the downtown along Royal Avenue and duplex residences west of 6th Street and in Sapperton. The city's commercial centre shifted uptown from Columbia Street to the junction of 6th Street and 6th Avenue after Woodward's department store opened there in 1954 complete with free rooftop



New Westminster: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement

parking for 300 cars with space nearby for 450 more vehicles.

New neighborhoods competed for attention. The subdivision of Victory Heights, located east of Glenbrooke North and honouring by its name those who had served in the Second World War, occupied some of the city's remaining unbuilt land. The nearby Massey Heights subdivision also filled with bungalows. The outlying area of Connaught Heights was amalgamated into New Westminster in 1965.

New Westminster's population expanded from 28,600 in 1951 to almost 43,000 by 1971, before falling back to 38,500 a decade later and then climbing back to 43,500 in 1991, 54,700 by 2001 and 58,500 by 2006. One of the consequences was attention to urban renewal.

Some familiar landmarks disappeared. In 1980 the BC Penitentiary closed and was sold by the federal government in 1985 as part of a massive Downtown revitalization plan. The site was developed in stages for housing but two significant buildings were retained and designated as heritage buildings. A waterfront quay project got underway in 1986, the same year Skytrain service commenced. Woodlands School was closed in phases in 1996-2003, being rezoned for residential development under the name of Victoria Hills. St. Mary's Hospital shut its doors in 2005.

The city's changing face turned affected the neighbourhoods. In 1975 the New Westminster City Council approved a plan to study each of them "in order to maintain or enhance their livability." Reports followed on Glenbrooke North in 1975, Victory Heights in 1978, Downtown in 1978, and Connaught Heights in 1983. The question of what constituted a neighbourhood was considered in 1981 in a discussion paper looking towards a community plan: "The neighbourhood should be considered as the minimum planning unit in all residential areas and should be determined by the service area of an elementary school, local park and convenience shopping" (13).



New Westminster: Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood Historical Context Statement

The New Westminster “official community plan” adopted in 1998, seeks to balance growth “primarily through redevelopment and intensification of under-utilized land” with the city “retain[ing] its small town historic charm for residents.” During the consultation process, “the community emphasized that future growth needs to be well planned out, considerate of the neighbourhood and contribute to the overall livability of the City” (27-28). More specifically:

“The community feels that residential neighbourhoods should continue to provide a quality residential environment with quaint historic houses, newer compatible houses, as well as low rise and high rise apartments including neighbourhood facilities (such as parks, schools and grocery stores) within walking distance. The majority of future growth should be encouraged away from established single detached residential neighbourhoods to areas better suited to new growth”. (28)

The areas suggested during community consultation for “the location of new growth” were the Downtown, Brow of the Hill, “undeveloped and under-utilized areas” such as Lower 12th Street, along arterials, as part of commercial streets, around the 22nd Street Skytrain station, through secondary suites in houses, and “in neighbourhoods of the City with older, multi-family housing stock” (27-28). The plan also looked to reducing the “impacts of heavy traffic adjacent to single detached homes” along 10th Avenue, 20th Street, and 12th Street.

Residents attested to the value of neighbourhoods and of heritage, the two becoming intertwined in many minds especially in respect to Queen’s Park. The New Westminster Heritage Preservation Society was formed in 1974, shortly after two prominent Queen’s Park houses were demolished. The New Westminster Heritage Foundation was founded in 1992. That same year the older heritage society began publication of *The Preservationist* intended to draw public attention to heritage issues. Residents’ associations were formed in all New Westminster neighbourhoods.