

Time Traveller Fall 2019

Sukh Sagar Gurdwara in Queensborough

344 Boyne Street and 347 Wood Street



The annual gathering at the first Sikh temple at Boyne Street in 1931.

IHP6464

Gurdwara means “guru’s door” and is a place of gathering and worship for people of the Sikh faith.

The New Westminster *gurdwara* started in 1911 or 1912; the first official mention was an announcement about its opening in October 1913 in the Victoria newspaper, *The Sansar*. The 1914 directory for New Westminster listed it incorrectly as a “Hindoo Temple.” As well, instead of listing it with the other places of worship, it was listed in the residential section. This first *gurdwara* was Bhai Bishan Singh Tallewal’s home at 344 Boyne Street in Queensborough.

On March 4, 1919, Bhai Bishan Singh paid \$250 for the house on the next lot. This house became the *gurdwara* building until the current one was built in the 1970s (the back parking lot of the current site). The *British Columbian* described the *gurdwara* in its July 28, 1928: “It is a commodious two-story building with a double verandah and balcony and is surrounded by a large garden which is now a riot of color due to the profusion of bloom. Sweet peas

predominate but dahlias, asters, marigolds and other flowers all add their color and perfume. Vegetables are not overlooked either and some fine corn and tomatoes bear testimony to the fertility of the Lulu Island soil and to the care bestowed upon the plants by their gardener and the custodian of the temple.”



Giani Mani Singh with his daughter Arwinder at their home in the temple on Boyne Street. The family lived there from 1962 until 1965 or 1966. Singh served as the *granthi* (similar to a priest).

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Construction on the new gurdwara began in 1972 and the building opened in winter 1975 at 347 Wood Street. The new gurdwara has an upper worship hall with a *takhat* (a raised throne) that holds the *Guru Granth Sahib* scripture under a canopy. Meanwhile, downstairs is the *langar*, where food is served after the service.



The current gurdwara, completed in 1975, underwent renovations from 2009-2016: it is now larger, with white domes and a dramatic gate.

Image courtesy of City of New Westminster

Today, the Sukh Sagar Gurdwara has had another update, stemming from renovations completed in 2016. The gurdwara is recognizable from its white domes with floral bases and its *Nishan Sahib* flag atop a tall pole. The flag is changed every Vaisakhi (around mid-April).