



Canada's  
Historic Places

Lieux patrimoniaux  
du Canada

## Charles Murray Residence

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### Charles Murray Residence

403 St. George Street, New Westminster, British Columbia

#### Other Name(s)

Rostrevor

#### Links

n/a

### Image(s)



[Front elevation, 2008](#)



[Front elevation, no date](#)



[Scientific American, Architects and Builders Ed.](#)

### Statement of Significance

#### Description of Historic Place

The Charles Murray Residence is a two-and-one-half storey, wood-frame Queen Anne Revival-style mansion, situated at the corner of St. George and Fourth Streets, in the historic Queen's Park neighbourhood in New Westminster. The house features complex asymmetrical massing, with multi-pitched rooflines, projecting semi-octagonal bays, tall corbelled red-brick chimneys, a two-storey stacked front verandah, and a third-floor balcony with lathe-turned columns.

#### Heritage Value

The Charles Murray Residence, built in 1890, is significant as one of Queen's Park grandest homes, built in the early stages of its Victorian-era development. Located uphill from the Fraser River and the downtown core, Queen's Park began to develop in the 1880s. Residential development was further encouraged when streetcar service to downtown commenced in 1890. The construction of this residence would have been a direct result of this improved access. An integral part of this neighbourhood's charm is Queen's Park itself, located on its eastern border, and offering public gardens, expansive green space and other social amenities. Large, curbed central boulevards, which were installed as part of New Westminster's civic beautification plan in 1913, add to the neighbourhood's appeal and help define elegant streetscapes. The historic character of Queen's Park is based on its consistent streetscapes of fine restored homes, of which the Charles Murray Residence is a prime example, augmented by mature landscaping.

Built in 1890, the Charles Murray Residence is a superb example of the Queen Anne Revival style, designed by renowned architects Charles Henry Clow (1860-1929) and Samuel Maclure (1860-1929), who were in partnership in New Westminster from 1887-1891. They received many local commissions as the population grew after the construction of a Canadian Pacific Railway spur line to the city in 1886. The firm relied extensively on pattern books for inspiration to create their Queen Anne-style residences. The Charles Murray Residence was based on the design for a house built in Greenfield, Massachusetts and published in the August 1888 Scientific American, Architects & Builders Edition. It was completed at a cost of \$5,000 by contractor Robert Brown Bell (1850-1940), who later went on to his own prolific career as an architect based in Vernon, BC. The house exhibits the highest quality of craftsmanship and detailing. It is characterized by its picturesque massing and complex rooflines, with a variety of cladding including fish-scale shingles, lapped wooden siding and tuck pointed granite foundations, that provide an elaborate surface articulation. Its art glass windows are the oldest surviving examples of Bloomfield glass; the Bloomfield family moved to New Westminster in 1889, and the following year established Henry Bloomfield & Sons, the first art glass studio in western Canada.

Furthermore, the Charles Murray Residence is valued for its association with first owner, Charles Murray, a local designer and artist, and for its affiliation with subsequent owner Walter R. Gilley. Murray only owned the house for a brief period, as he was forced to sell in the 1890s due to a downturn in the economy. In 1901, the house was purchased by Walter Gilley, a successful local lumberman who hailed from New Brunswick. Gilley, along with his two brothers, established Gilley Brothers, one of the City's largest contracting supply firms. Gilley renamed the house Rostrevor, and the Gilley family retained ownership until 1961.

Source: City of New Westminster Planning Department

### Character-Defining Elements

Key elements that define the heritage character of the Charles Murray Residence include its:

- prominent setback from the street on a large corner property at St. George Street and Fourth Streets, among houses of similar age and style in the Queen's Park neighbourhood
- residential form, scale and massing, as expressed by its asymmetrical, two-and-one-half storey plus full basement height, complex multi-pitched roofline and picturesque, asymmetrical massing
- construction materials, such as wood-frame construction with lapped wooden siding, decorative shingles and cedar shingle roof; and masonry construction as expressed by the granite foundations with raised red tuck pointing, and massive red-brick chimneys
- elements of the Queen Anne Revival style, such as picturesque, asymmetrical massing, projecting semi-octagonal bays, contrasting textures of wall materials, partial-width verandah with second floor balcony above, and third floor balcony, with lathe-turned columns, and half-timbering in the front gable peak
- windows, such as one-over-one double-hung wood-sash windows with horns, multi-paned casement windows, some with stained glass, lunette windows with stained glass, and other stained glass windows
- original double-leaf wooden front door with multi-paned glass insets
- associated landscape features, such as the grassed yard, mature holly and perimeter plantings

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### Location

#### Province/Territory

British Columbia

#### Street Address

403 St. George Street

#### Location

New Westminster

Queen's Park

### Recognition

#### Jurisdiction

British Columbia

#### Recognition Authority

Local Governments (BC)

#### Recognition Statute

Local Government Act, s.966

#### Recognition Type

Heritage Revitalization Agreement

#### Recognition Date

7/10/2000

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### Historical Information

#### Construction Date(s)

1890

#### Significant Date(s)

n/a

#### Theme - Category and Type

Peopling the Land

Settlement

#### Function - Category and Type

##### Historic

Residence

Single Dwelling

##### Architect / Designer

Samuel Maclure

Charles Henry Clow

##### Current

Residence

Single Dwelling

##### Builder

Robert Brown Bell

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### Additional Information

#### Related Listing(s)

n/a

#### Location of Supporting Documentation

City of New Westminster Planning Department

**Cross-Reference to Collection**

n/a

**Fed/Prov/Terr Identifier**

DhRr-269

**Status**

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