
Schedule 1 to the Minutes of the
General Purposes Committee
meeting of Richmond City
Council held on Monday,
September 21, 2020.

From: Steves, Harold <hsteves@richmond.ca>

Sent: September 21, 2020 12:04 AM

To: MayorandCouncillors <MayorandCouncillors@richmond.ca>; Brodie, Malcolm <MBrodie@richmond.ca>;
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Subject: Britannia Shipyard First Nation "Long House"

To: Mayor and Council,

Sept. 20, 2020

From: Councillor Harold Steves

Re: General Purposes Agenda item 7,
First Nation "Long House" preservation costs.

In September, 1988 Archaeologist Len Ham prepared a Heritage Overview of the buildings at the Britannia Shipyard for the city of Richmond. I frequently worked with Dr Ham on Indian Land claims and Archaeological sites in Delta and Richmond. He told me the First Nation house was definitely not a bunkhouse but it was a smokehouse with a single front door and City staff had not followed his recommendations. When he died he willed his research material on Richmond to me and the attached document was among his papers. (Heritage Overview attached)

The First Nation House was built some distance inland before the dykes were built in 1907. Similar to the First Nation houses at Garry Point and Imperial Landing it was likely built on a sea berm above the tide level. It was called a "Smoke House" by First nation people because of the central fire pit filling the house with smoke before it went through an opening in the roof. Settlers generally called it a "Long House"

Dr. Ham suggested that a tree ring study of the fir boards should be done to determine when it was built similar to the study done on the Murakami House. Such a study would likely show that the building was constructed around 1882 when Marshall English built his "Fish Camp" and then a cannery on the site.

First Nation men did not live in bunkhouses. From 1882 to 1909 when the first Japanese women arrived First Nation men caught the fish and First Nation women did the canning in the canneries. As the oldest cannery the Phoenix had a Smokehouse or Long house for families to live in while later canneries had rows of shed roof huts.

Dr. Ham states, "it is a very long building with numerous windows. While it shares these features with other native Indian cannery dwellings, this structure is unique in that it is gable rather than shed roofed. It is more similar to the large historic smokehouses which were situated at several Coast Salish Villages during the late

1800's and early 1900's.... Air photographs suggest the presence of a single door to this structure located in the middle of it's southern side." "it may be a very significant building. If this building was used to house Indian cannery workers, it is both rare and unique as it is the last remaining Indian cannery dwelling."

Later, restoration of the building was approved by Richmond Council and \$160,000 was budgeted.

Recommendation:

1. That City records be amended to indicate the building is not a bunkhouse but likely a smokehouse or longhouse.
2. That tree ring or other studies be done to better determine the age of the building.
3. That staff investigate reconstructing the building with careful demolition and re-use of internal woodwork, studs, cross beams and rafters similar to the reconstruction of the Murakami Boatworks; plus, the addition of typical welcoming totems in front of the building using civic art funds.

A HERITAGE OVERVIEW OF "AREA E" OF THE BRITANNIA WATERFRONT,
BEING PART OF THE CANNERY ROW WEST HISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE,
DgRt 6

(A non-permit report)

Prepared on behalf of the Richmond Heritage Advisory Committee

for

Department of Planning,
The Corporation of the Township of Richmond,
6911 No. 3 Road, Richmond, B.C. V6Y 2C1

and

Triple R Land (1984) Corporation
211-8171 Park Road, Richmond, B.C. V6Y 1S9

Leonard P. Ham

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Archaeologist & Heritage Consultant
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15 September 1988

Phoenix Gear Storage Building (Building No. 11).

This building (Figure 4a) is of frame construction with board and batten and metal roofing over planks (Stacey 1984). Both boards and batten appear to be red cedar. This building is unusual in that the board and batten are vertical and secured with cut iron nails. It originally had numerous small windows, now boarded up, probably at the same time small doors were cut along its south face to facilitate its use for gear storage.

Stacey (1984:15) estimated its age as pre-1940, but noted it did not appear on early maps. The reason for this is that the structure was moved to the waterfront from Dyke Road between 1946 and 1949 (cf., Figures 14 and 15). Between 1949 and 1919 it is located due north of its present location and immediately south of Dyke Road. It is not numbered on the 1936 Richmond Waterworks Map (Figure 11), but is numbered as building 33 on the 1946 Fire Insurance Plan (pre-move, Figure 14) and retains that number on the 1960 Fire Insurance Plan (post-move, Figure 16). Building dimensions are also identical on the 1946 and 1960 Fire Insurance Plans, and on 1938 and 1932 Air Photographs (Figures 14, 16, 13 and 12).

This building may have been a cannery dwelling originally used to house Indian workers. This preliminary interpretation is based largely upon the fact it is a very long building with numerous windows. While it shares these features with other native Indian cannery dwellings, this structure is unique in that it is gable rather than shed roofed. It is more similar to the large historic smokehouses which were situated at several Coast Salish villages during the late 1800s and early 1900s (see Figures 5 and 6). Both the 1938 and the 1932 Air Photographs suggest the presence of a single door to this structure located in the middle of its southern side (Figures 13 and 12).



(Special Collections, UBC, from Curtis 1970)
Figure 5 Historic Coast Salish Smokehouse At Cowichan

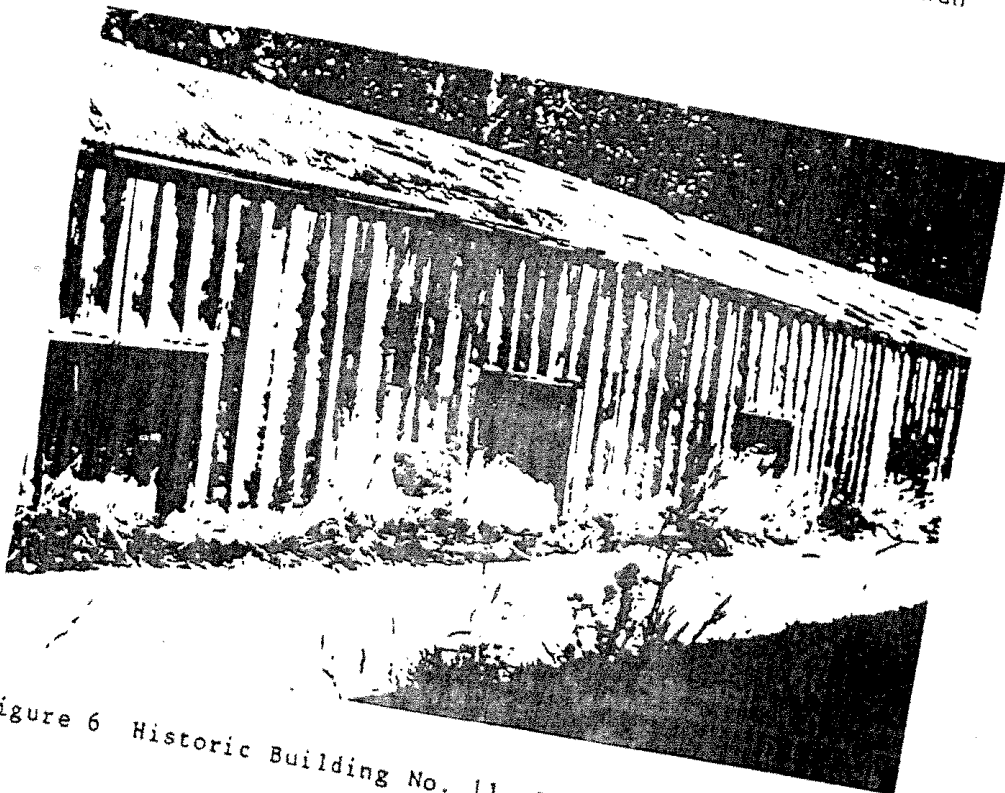


Figure 6 Historic Building No. 11, DgRt 6

In spite of the fact that this structure is no longer situated in its original location, it is our opinion (Ham and Stacey) that it may be a very significant building. If this building was used to house Indian cannery workers, it is both rare and unique as it is the last remaining Indian cannery dwelling.

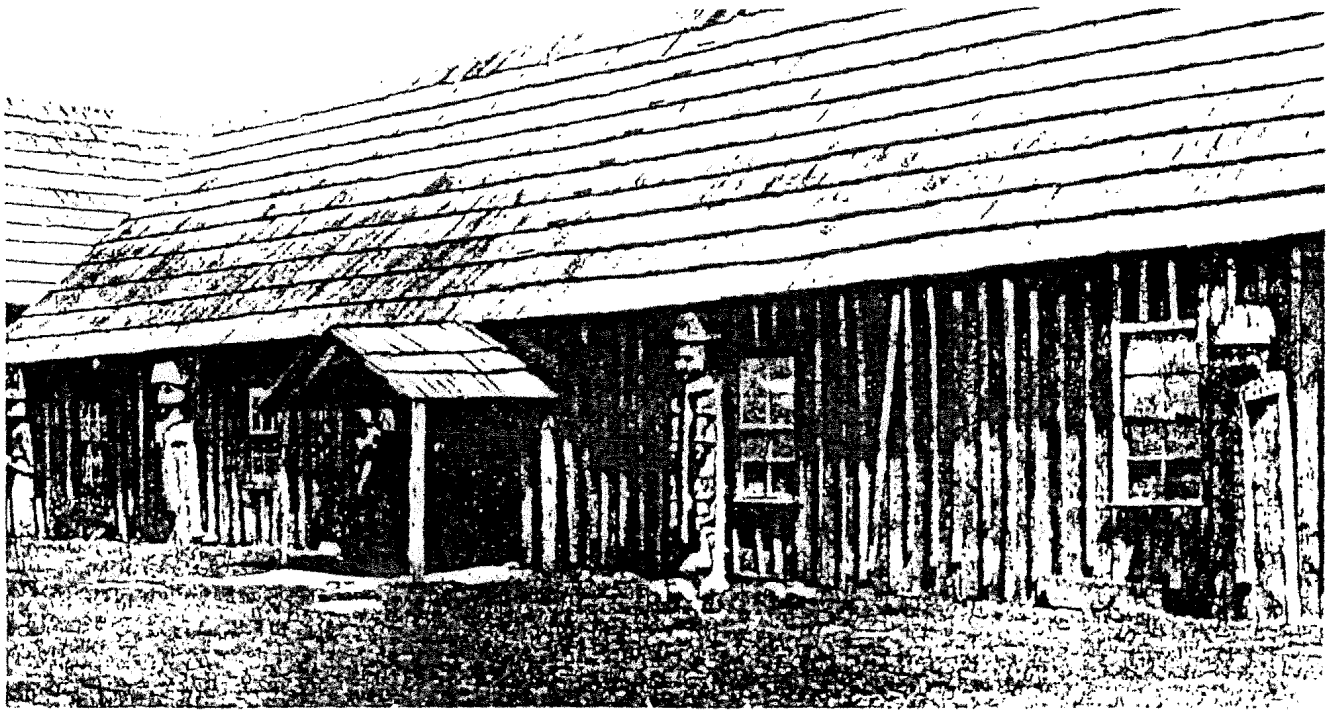
Building No. 11 is assigned a medium heritage value.

Phoenix Boatworks (Building No. 12)

This structure (Figure 4a) is of frame construction with board and batten siding and a shingle roof (Stacey 1984). The construction date and history of this building have not been previously identified.

This structure is building No. 39 on both the 1960 and 1946 Fire Insurance Plans (Figures 16 and 14), labelled as Boat House No 3 on the 1960 plan, and simply as Boat House on the 1946 plan. The 1936 Richmond Waterworks Map (Figure 11) does not provide a number for this structure, but labels it as a "Boat House". It is also clearly evident on both the 1938 and 1932 Air Photographs (Figures 13 and 12). A short ways extending from the boathouse across the boardwalk to the water is visible in both photographs. The 1911 Fire Insurance Plan (Figure 9) does not extend west far enough to include this building, but it is obvious on the 1919 Geological Survey Map (Figure 10) as it and the following structure are oriented on a northwest/southeast axis. Earlier maps do not extend to the area in question.

Thus this building dates to at least 1919 and probably much earlier, and may have been used to build packers and Columbia River boats (Stacey, pers. comm.). It is assigned a medium heritage value due to its potentially unique function.



A Salish long house early in this century. Although modifications had been made in the form of building by adding windows and a gabled roof, the carvings were similar to those seen by Simon Fraser a century before.

tively small in regional terms (usually between fifty and sixty feet long, a little less wide, and between twelve and fourteen feet to the ridge pole); but they made up for this compactness in the splendour of their decoration, which among the Haida, who added massive carved portal and corner posts and wall paintings, became the Coast Indian equivalents of Gothic or baroque church facades, except that they were dedicated not to the glory of God (the Coast peoples had no temples as such or the kind of worship for which they might be necessary) but rather to the glory of the resident chiefs and their ancestors and through them to the glory of the clan they headed.

The southern type of house, which existed in a modified form among the more southerly groups of the Nootka and which appears to have

been the older pattern, used frameworks of dressed timber but differed from the northern form in a number of basic features. Instead of the gabled roof, it had a simple shed roof (supported on poles) that sloped almost imperceptibly downward — because the frame at the front of the house was a foot or so higher than that at the back. The walls of the northern houses consisted of upright planks which fitted into slotted sills; those of the Salish houses consisted of overlapping horizontal planks lashed to upright poles, which actually formed a kind of outer shell separate from the framework that supported the roof, which also was made of overlapping cedar planks.

But the great difference lay in the dimensions and the divisions of the house. The Salish houses were far larger than anything built in the north-

E.S. Curtis - print at Special Collections USC

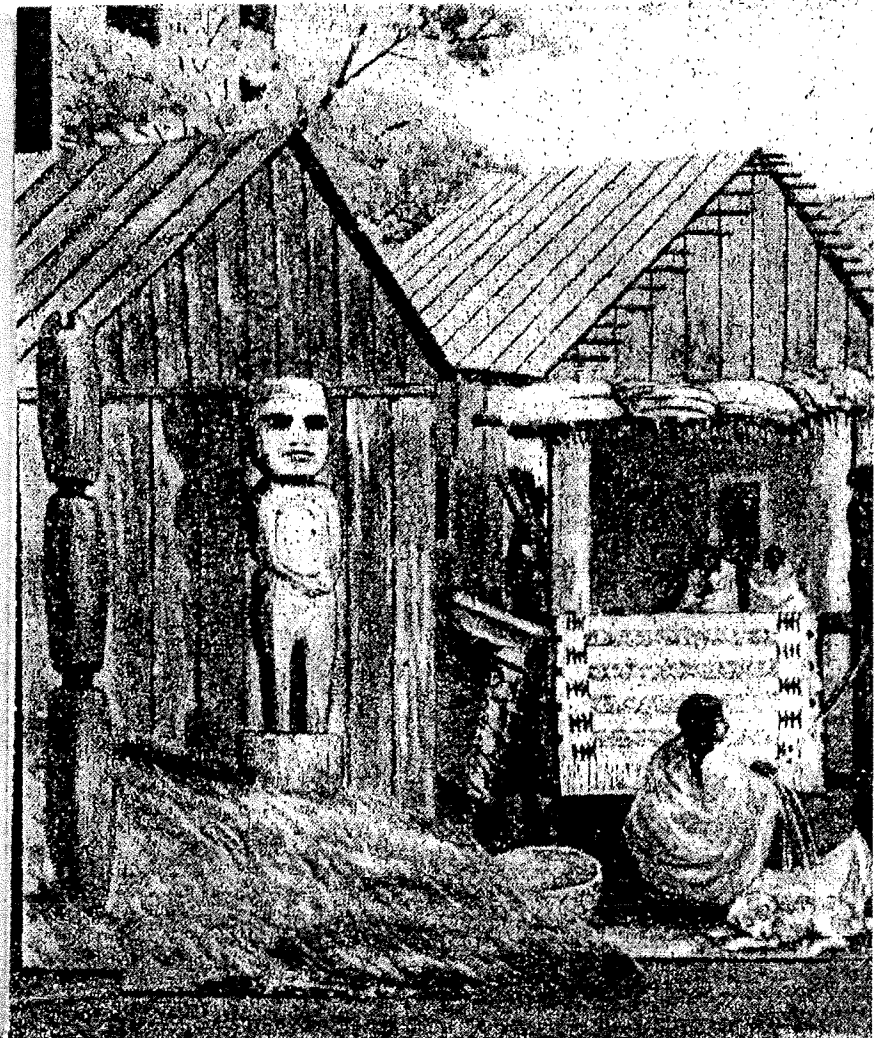
from George Woodcock, (1977). Peoples of the Coast. Indiana University Press

Duncan Longhouse:

The Duncan Longhouse
had a Welcoming Totem
at the central door and
four more along the front.



Archaeologist Len Ham discovered that the Longhouse at Britannia Shipyard
had one single central door similar to the Duncan Longhouse



Duncan

Potlach

