

ATTACHMENT A

LAND “FERNVILLE” RESIDENCE HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

Built around 1890, the Land “Fernville” Residence is a very good example of a picturesque Late Victorian building. Tall and imposing in massing, the house features a cross-gabled roof. The ground floor is clad in drop siding; the second floor in bellcast shingling. The corner entry porch is supported on a single, turned column. Coloured glass insets exist in the corners of some of the windows.

The Land “Fernville” Residence is an excellent example of a private conservation project. When built, the house was part of a group of superior residences in what was then Nanaimo’s most elegant neighbourhood. By 2007 the area was overwhelmingly industrial and most of the original homes had been demolished. Fernville was owned by a local construction firm and because the firm wished to expand its storage yard was offered to anyone willing to move it. Interest was expressed by a number of organizations but eventually a local family moved the building to its current site, only a few blocks away but in a much less industrialized area and adjacent to a public park. Since the move, both the new owners, with the help of neighbours and community association members, have worked to restore the building. Although some changes have been made as a result of the relocation, the building remains substantially intact. The move and subsequent restoration of Fernville speaks to the community’s acknowledgement of the value of heritage buildings in their neighbourhood.

The property at 84 Esplanade on which the building was originally located was acquired from Angus McKenzie by Captain Peter M. Land in 1888. Land, a master mariner, is listed as living here the following year; the house was either built at this time, or at a slightly later point during Land’s ownership.

By 1905 the house was acquired by Mrs. C.E. Barton of Vancouver, and by 1908 was owned by the E.G. Cavalsky family. Edward George Cavalsky was born in Denmark, and came to Victoria in 1880, where he lived for six years, employed on the coast boats. In 1886 he moved to Nanaimo, and opened a grocery business, and after a varied career, went into insurance and accounting. Cavalsky served on Nanaimo City Council for 17 different terms, starting in 1908; he also joined the fire department in 1888, becoming the secretary in 1895. Cavalsky married Laura Gilbert in 1887 – she had arrived in Nanaimo with her family in 1874. By the time of their Golden Anniversary in 1937, they were considered “one of Nanaimo’s best known and most beloved pioneer couples.”