About James Bay

The fertile flat peninsula across the harbour from Fort Victoria is the neighbourhood we now know as James Bay. When the Europeans arrived, seasonal camps belonging to the ancestors of the Songhees First Nation dotted the cliffs, and a burial ground dominated Laurel Pt. Sir James Douglas had established the Fort in 1843, and he set aside much of the peninsula for Beckley Farm, to supply Hudson’s Bay Company personnel. (The home farm stood near the intersection of Menzies & Simcoe.) Douglas built himself a fine home in 1852 on the north shore, facing the fort (now site of the Royal BC Museum). Later, Queen Victoria appointed Douglas as Governor of Vancouver Island, then of British Columbia. Douglas Street and the original James Bay were named for him. His son-in-law, Dr. J.S. Helmcken, the colony’s first doctor, built next door the same year, and his home, Arbutus Lodge, survives on its original site, beside the museum, the oldest surviving building in the city.

After construction of the first legislative buildings for the Colony of Vancouver Island in 1858-60, and the first James Bay Bridge in 1859 (now the Causeway), the surrounding area became desirable residential property for Victoria’s social and political elite, who built substantial homes nearby. Woodlands, built in 1861, (140 Government) is the oldest surviving residence still in use in James Bay, but many other villas have succumbed to development. Several of the Carr family homes have survived.

During the 1880s and '90s, James Bay’s west end became an important industrial area, with a flour mill, grain elevator, shipyard, furniture factory, biscuit factory, woollen mill and fish-processing plant. This prompted further modest residential construction. The increased population led to building the substantial South Park School in 1894 and the Beacon Hill School (now residences) in 1914. The popularity of the area was cemented by the opening of the vast new Legislature in 1898 and the reclamation of the original James Bay for the Empress Hotel in 1901. The “Outer Wharves” at the tip of the peninsula (now cruise-ship docks) and completion of the huge Ogden Point Breakwater (1917), to encourage shipping, also spurred home-building. This prompted further modest residential construction. The increased population led to building the substantial South Park School in 1894 and the Beacon Hill School (now residences) in 1914. The popularity of the area was cemented by the opening of the vast new Legislature in 1898 and the reclamation of the original James Bay for the Empress Hotel in 1901. The “Outer Wharves” at the tip of the peninsula (now cruise-ship docks) and completion of the huge Ogden Point Breakwater (1917), to encourage shipping, also spurred home-building. This prompted further modest residential construction. The increased population led to building the substantial South Park School in 1894 and the Beacon Hill School (now residences) in 1914. The popularity of the area was cemented by the opening of the vast new Legislature in 1898 and the reclamation of the original James Bay for the Empress Hotel in 1901. The “Outer Wharves” at the tip of the peninsula (now cruise-ship docks) and completion of the huge Ogden Point Breakwater (1917), to encourage shipping, also spurred home-building. This prompted further modest residential construction. The increased population led to building the substantial South Park School in 1894 and the Beacon Hill School (now residences) in 1914. The popularity of the area was cemented by the opening of the vast new Legislature in 1898 and the reclamation of the original James Bay for the Empress Hotel in 1901. The “Outer Wharves” at the tip of the peninsula (now cruise-ship docks) and completion of the huge Ogden Point Breakwater (1917), to encourage shipping, also spurred home-building. This prompted further modest residential construction. The increased population led to building the substantial South Park School in 1894 and the Beacon Hill School (now residences) in 1914. The popularity of the area was cemented by the opening of the vast new Legislature in 1898 and the reclamation of the original James Bay for the Empress Hotel in 1901. The “Outer Wharves” at the tip of the peninsula (now cruise-ship docks) and completion of the huge Ogden Point Breakwater (1917), to encourage shipping, also spurred home-building. This prompted further modest residential construction. The increased population led to building the substantial South Park School in 1894 and the Beacon Hill School (now residences) in 1914. The popularity of the area was cemented by the opening of the vast new Legislature in 1898 and the reclamation of the original James Bay for the Empress Hotel in 1901. The “Outer Wharves” at the tip of the peninsula (now cruise-ship docks) and completion of the huge Ogden Point Breakwater (1917), to encourage shipping, also spurred home-building.

Community activism in the 1970s persuaded municipal government to restrict the tide of highrises and to preserve some of James Bay's heritage buildings. But the current building boom is once again taking its toll on James Bay’s beautiful old homes and streetscapes.
**ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES**

- **6-over-1 double-hung windows**
- **pyramidal hipped roof**
- **mansion roof**
- **corbelled chimney**
- **pedimented gable**
- **eyebrow dormer**
- **eyebrow dormer**
- **paired modillion (horizontal flat) brackets**

**Victoria Heritage Foundation (VHF)**

in partnership with the City of Victoria, has produced *Neighbourhood Heritage Walking Tour* brochures for parts of the James Bay, North Park, Fernwood, Hillside-Quadra, Fairfield & Burnside neighbourhoods.

These are available from Victoria City Hall, the Tourist Info Centre on the Inner Harbour, VHF and locations throughout the neighbourhoods.

The VHF website includes the walking tours, complete with photos of all buildings.

Detailed architectural information on James Bay buildings listed on the City of Victoria's Heritage Register, with a great deal of social history & many photographs, old & new, can be found in the *Victoria Heritage Foundation*’s publication *This Old House, Victoria’s Heritage Neighbourhoods, Volume 2: James Bay*.

All four volumes of *This Old House* are available at Victoria City Hall & local independent booksellers.

**TYPICAL JAMES BAY HOUSING STYLES**

- **Italianate**
  - (1860-1900)
  - Cubical, symmetrical façade with low-pitched roof
  - **Typical features:**
    - small front porch
    - overhanging eaves with decorative brackets
    - angled & box bay windows often 2-storeys
    - tall, narrow double-hung windows
    - no beltcourse

- **Queen Anne**
  - (1880-1910)
  - Asymmetrical façade with steeply-pitched roof
  - **Typical features:**
    - a variety of surface treatments
    - turrets, finials, decorated cornices and bargeboards
    - prominent front porch with spindlework
    - cutaway angled bay windows
    - double-hung windows

- **Edwardian Foursquare**
  - (1900-1920)
  - Low-pitched hip-roofed 2-storey box
  - **Typical features:**
    - 4 rooms on each level
    - wide eaves
    - prominent front porch
    - horizontal features such as belt course & contrasting cladding at different levels

- **Edwardian Vernacular Arts & Crafts**
  - (1904-1914)
  - A common builder’s style in Victoria.
  - 1½-stories, steeply-pitched roof, belt course, symmetrical main floor, symmetrical upper,
  - **Typical features:**
    - front-gabled
    - side dormers
    - inset corner porch balanced by bay window
    - contrasting cladding at different levels

- **British Arts & Crafts**
  - (1905-1930)
  - Vernacular building types from British regions/periods
  - **Typical features:**
    - asymmetrical design
    - Tudor references such as stucco with half-timbering
    - informal, functional plan
    - prominent chimney

- **Colonial Bungalow**
  - (1905-1925)
  - Economical 1-storey, hip-roofed (often bellcast) bungalow
  - **Typical features:**
    - at least 1 dormer
    - wide projecting eaves
    - inset verandah
    - Classical columns or posts with simplified capitals
Start at St. corner of Government & Superior Sts.

605 Superior St 1887 arch. John Teague, many alterations. Owners Norma & G Frank, daughter of St. James & Lady Amalia Douglass. (see "About James Bay", over) 360 Superior SW corner arch. W.H. Fyfe, Printers, Art Deco style. 352 Superior arch. W.H. Hargreaves for BC Government. 357 Government St left side 1890, right side 1911, arch. Wm Y McCarter & Wm Drysdale. 1897 government built Government St. Originally part of the property moved here from Superior St in 1914; stuccoed over original types of brackets, widow's walk on roof, Eastlake style porch.

Cross Government St - turn left on Toronto St 539 Toronto Blvd built 1903 to north on Government, moved 1915, then 1972 to here. Edwardian Classical Revival/VA, pedimented entrance, cornice columns, tower balanced by arched windows. 538 1892 QA cottage, steep hipped roof with front & side gables over large bays with caddy corners & brackets, fishscale shingles, shingled cutouts in gable bargeboards. 535 1910 Colonial Bungalow with A/C details. 534 1878 Italianate Villa style, double-hung windows, porch hood. 533 1891 QA, A/C stucco over original siding. 531 1878-79 A/C, owners Wm Lother & daughter, built by William Harrow & Sons, ornamental ironwork, quartered sawn oak floor, never moved.

Continue on Superior St - turn right on South Turner St 516 South Turner 1911 A/C Edwardsian Foursquare, designer/builder Alex McCrimmon for Elizabeth & George Sanders. 515 1911 British A&C Bungalow, variation, heavy hip roof; also by McCrimmon for Sanders.

Corner of Superior Av & Government Sts.


513 1890 Victorian cottage, note porch & front door.

508 1903 Edwardian Foursquare variation, arch. Thomas Hooper for widow Frances Mansell & family. 507 1904 Colonial Bungalow, note unusual window placement across front. 506 1897 A&C cottage, arch. Samuel Maclure

505 1893 South Park School, vernacular Edwardian cottage with many additions.


Continue on Edwardian Ave.

506 1903 Edwardian Foursquare, note unusual window placement across front. 505 1893 South Park School, vernacular Edwardian cottage with many additions.


Continue on Edwardian Ave.


Continue on Edwardian Ave.

510 1891 Italianate, 2-storey front bay, 3 types of brackets. Owners Elizabeth (Lother) & Frederick Jackson. 509 1890 1891 It was built in 1896, with many millwork details, not in period colours. 508 1917 1897 A&C garage, studio built 1997. Owners Else (Arthur) & William Lother, architect. 507 1906 Edwardian Foursquare, note unusual window placement across front.