



DATE OF MEETING: December 13, 2023  
TO: Hornby Island Local Trust Committee  
FROM: Margot Thomaidis, Planner 2  
Northern Team  
COPY: Renée Jamurat, Regional Planning Manager  
SUBJECT: Project Charter for Community Heritage Register

## RECOMMENDATION

- 1. That the Hornby Island Local Trust Committee approve the draft Project Charter version 1.0 for developing a Community Heritage Register as a minor project in the 2024-2025 fiscal year.**

## REPORT SUMMARY

This report introduces a draft Project Charter for a minor project containing information about the possible deliverables, scope, budget, community consultation and staff time required to develop a Community Heritage Register (Register) for three historical buildings on Hornby Island. Best practices suggest implementing a Register as an integral part of a local government's larger heritage program to help achieve community goals. The proposed minor project will include planning and research, assessing community heritage issues and needs, and support the identification of heritage values. These values will be used to establish eligibility criteria contained in the Register. In addition, this work will involve the opportunity to further identify aesthetic, historic or cultural, scientific, social, spiritual, and any other qualities, used to categorize heritage values for the community.

A Register will enable the LTC to understand and identify the significance of the community's historic places, to support future monitoring of heritage properties for proposed changes, and to integrate heritage conservation activities into land use planning processes in the future.

After receiving direction from the LTC in June 2023, staff have prepared a project charter proposed to begin in 2024. The LTC is asked to decide whether to revise or approve the draft Project Charter version 1.0 as proposed.

## BACKGROUND

This report follows a request to the LTC by the Hornby Island Residents and Ratepayers Association (HIRRA) Community Hall Committee regarding establishing a Register for Hornby Island, in order to secure funding through the Comox Valley Regional District's (CVRD's) *Hornby Island Heritage Conservation Service Establishment Bylaw No. 317, 2014*.

The LTC is being asked to move forward a project to establish a Community Heritage Register in order to officially recognize three historic buildings: the Community Hall, the Old Schoolhouse, and the Room to Grow building.

At the December 10, 2021 LTC meeting, the following resolution was passed:

**HO-2021-078**

**It was MOVED and SECONDED,**

that the Hornby Island Local Trust Committee add Community Heritage Register to the Projects List.

**CARRIED**

At the January 20, 2023 LTC meeting, the following resolution was passed:

**HO-LTC-2023-006**

**It was MOVED and SECONDED,**

that the Hornby Island Local Trust Committee ask staff for analysis on resources and funding in adding 'Heritage Registry' and 'Excluding cisterns from the setback requirement' and adding to the projects list by next meeting.

**CARRIED**

At the June 16, 2023 LTC meeting, the following resolution was passed:

**HO-LTC-2023-028**

**It was MOVED and SECONDED,**

that the Hornby Island Local Trust Committee request staff to prepare a Project Charter for the Community Heritage Register for the 2023/2024 fiscal year, with the scope and objectives to be determined by the Local Trust Committee.

**CARRIED**

During summer 2023, a grant from the CVRD for \$5,000 was provided to HIRRA to assist the Community Hall Committee to retain a cultural heritage consultant to prepare Statements of Significance for the Community Hall and the Old Schoolhouse. Statements of Significance are an important initial step in forming a Register and require professional expertise and/or oversight to produce. In mid-November, HIRRA completed two draft Statements of Significance, one for each property (Attachment 2). According to HIRRA, the full extent of the grant was not utilized for the initial two Statements of Significance, and remaining funds are being used to prepare a third statement of significance for the Room to Grow building.

The Community Hall building currently requires significant foundation and insulation upgrades, an accessible washroom, and other overdue maintenance and structural improvements. Establishing a Community Heritage Register and adding these buildings would open HIRRA's access to significant capital funding opportunities for current and future ongoing improvements for all three buildings. Although a Community Heritage Register is not a regulation, policy, or bylaw; it still must be formally established by local government resolution, therefore the LTC's involvement is key.

A draft Project Charter version 1.0 is provided in Attachment 1 for the LTC's consideration, with staff work anticipated to start in early 2024.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Policy/Regulatory**

The Islands Trust Policy Statement and the Hornby Island Official Community Plan policies below support the identification, preservation, protection, and enhancement of heritage values. A Register is a first step in identifying local heritage resources and values that align with OCP policies.

The project charter is proposed based on the Trust Council [Policy 5.9.1](#) Best Management Practices for Delivery of Local Planning Services.

## **Islands Trust Policy Statement**

Two Islands Trust Policy Statement (ITPS) directive policies are relevant to heritage conservation:

*5.6.2 Local Trust Committees and Island Municipalities shall, in their official community plans and regulatory bylaws, address the identification, protection, preservation and enhancement of local heritage.*

*5.6.3 Local Trust Committees and Island Municipalities shall, in their official community plans and regulatory bylaws, address the preservation and protection of the heritage value and character of historic coastal settlement patterns and remains.*

## **Official Community Plan**

The Hornby Island Official Community Plan (OCP) contains statements supporting heritage conservation in the Local Trust Area. Section 3.7 – Heritage Features includes:

*The community supports the concept of preservation of areas of unique or representative natural systems and of preserving heritage resources.*

The OCP includes the following Heritage Features Objectives, Policies, and Advocacy Policies:

### *Heritage Features Objective*

*The objective of this subsection is to protect the Island's heritage sites and resources, including heritage roads, and to promote the preservation and public availability of artefacts and historical records.*

### *Heritage Features Policies*

*3.7.1 All cemeteries should be considered community heritage sites and some mechanism of protecting them in perpetuity should be sought.*

*3.7.2 Development shall be located away from areas of archaeological sites unless authorized by a permit issued under the Heritage Conservation Act.*

*3.7.3 Development Permits should be required and guidelines developed once heritage areas are accurately identified and designated or otherwise protected.*

### *Heritage Features Advocacy Policies*

*3.7.4 A program to identify buildings and sites of historical significance and outstanding or typical examples of local architecture is supported and where appropriate, the Comox Valley Regional District or the Province are requested to designate or otherwise protect and preserve these resources.*

*3.7.5 The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts is encouraged to assist in further identifying all archaeological sites on the Island and to ensure those sites are protected from disturbance under the provisions of Section 13 of the Heritage Conservation Act.*

*3.7.8 The establishment of covenants held by the Islands Trust Fund to protect heritage sites is supported.*

*3.7.9 The establishment of a local museum and/or archive involving appropriate societies is supported.*

## **Heritage Conservation Tools in the Local Government Act**

LTC authority to introduce regulation(s) related to heritage conservation derives from the *Local Government Act (LGA)*. Under the *LGA*, there are four actions an LTC can take concerning heritage conservation. In order of lowest to highest level of heritage conservation and protection, these are:

### 1) Community Heritage Register (LGA Section 598)

Established by local government resolution, a Community Heritage Register (Register) is an official list of historic places, specific to a community, which have been identified by a local government as having heritage value or heritage character. A Register provides formal recognition for historic places and may be used as a planning tool by communities interested in integrating heritage conservation activities into local government land use planning processes. Potential benefits of a Register include:

- Enhancing public appreciation of community character and identity;
- Facilitating public access to heritage information;
- Informing property owners and prospective buyers of a property's heritage value;
- Integrating heritage conservation into community planning;
- Enhancing community sustainability;
- Facilitating eligibility for heritage programs and incentives;
- Enabling special provisions within the BC Building Code for heritage properties; and
- Enabling local governments to consider and take protective actions to protect historic places.

A Register enables a local government to understand and identify the significance of a community's historic places, to monitor heritage properties for proposed changes, and to integrate heritage conservation activities into other local government land use planning processes.

A Community Heritage Register alone ***does not***:

- provide legal heritage designation or any other type of formal protection of a historic place;
- apply nor is it enforced under the Land Use Bylaw (or any Islands Trust Bylaws);
- limit the alterations a heritage property owner may make to an historic place; or
- create eligibility for any financial incentive or compensation from the local government.

### 2) Heritage Recognition (LGA Section 599)

As an advocacy action, the local government may formally recognize the heritage value of a property through installation of a plaque or other marker on the property. This can only be done with the permission of the property owners.

### 3) Heritage Conservation Area (LGA Section 614)

This considers a land use designation, where the local government may designate particular locations and the built or landscape features within it to be a Heritage Conservation Area in its Official Community Plan. This is a more regulated option, whereby once established in the OCP, development must be consistent to support it and may require an additional permit and related application processing. A Heritage Conservation Area (HCA) functions in a similar manner to a Development Permit Area, in that undertaking particular types of alterations to a building or landscape feature identified in the HCA would require a Heritage Alteration Permit (HAP) from the local government. The OCP would be amended to introduce a number of guidelines that a property owner would be required to meet if their proposed development plans triggered the requirement for a HAP. Introduction of a HCA does not require the consent of effected property owners.

### 4) Heritage Designation Protection Bylaw (LGA Section 611)

This option considers more regulatory measures, whereby the local government may adopt a heritage protection bylaw for a particular property. Such a bylaw prohibits certain activities from being undertaken without a Heritage Alteration Permit from the local government, such as alteration to the exterior of a building or other structure protected under this section. This tool may also consider establishing land use designations and zoning through the OCP and LUB bylaws.

*The proposed Project Charter only considers establishing a Community Heritage Register (option #1 above) and not options 2, 3, or 4. Options 3 and 4 may be considered as future major projects.*

## **Issues and Opportunities**

### ***Community Heritage Register Establishment***

While the LTC has broad authority and land use regulatory tools available under the *Local Government Act* with respect to heritage conservation, the Register offers a logical, easy, and achievable starting point for Heritage Conservation planning within the scope of an LTC minor project. A Register does not place a financial responsibility or liability on an LTC (for example, to compensate property owners for potential loss of property value as a result of heritage designation).

The addition of historic places to a Register must be established by local government (LTC) resolution following consideration of associated Statements of Significance. A Statement of Significance (SoS):

- Summarizes the description, heritage value and character-defining elements of each historic place;
- Reflects modern values concerning history and historic places; and
- Identifies what part of history a historic place represents, and how and why that is of value and importance today.

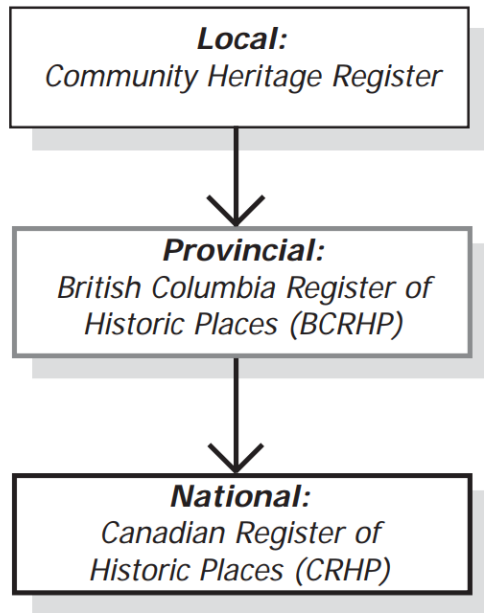
Statements of Significance should follow guidelines established by the Province.<sup>1</sup>

### ***British Columbia Register of Historic Places/Canadian Register of Historic Places***

Register listings may also be included in the British Columbia Register of Historic Places (BCRHP) the official provincial listing of historic places that have been formally recognized for their heritage value by the Province or local governments. BCRHP listings may also be included on the Canadian Register of Historic Places (CRHP).

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<sup>1</sup> Province of BC Heritage Branch. Guidelines for Writing Effective Statements of Significance. [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/our-history/historic-places/documents/heritage/guidelines\\_writing\\_statements\\_significance.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/our-history/historic-places/documents/heritage/guidelines_writing_statements_significance.pdf) (April 13, 2023).



Source: Government of British Columbia

Statements of Significance must meet provincial and federal standards, and further data gathering and submission could be required. Community groups seeking to add sites to the provincial or national Registers are encouraged to employ the services of a consultant, which HIRRA has already done.

### **Community Heritage Register Process**

Heritage BC (a charitable society with provincial scope) offers step-by-step guidance for local governments when establishing and maintaining a Community Heritage Register, as outlined in the following eight steps. Staff recommend this minor project focus on STEPS 1-7 (establishing the Register). STEP 8 (maintenance) may require additional staff time, which is identified as out of scope based on the project timeline, resources and key deliverables. The suggested steps for the LTC are as follows:

**STEP 1:** Research and identify community heritage resources. Obtain or develop the required documentation, including Statements of Significance for each property.

**STEP 2:** Create a preliminary Community Heritage Register list of resources. This may be prepared by local government staff, members of the community heritage commission, or by a group appointed by local government, like a Heritage Advisory Planning Commission. Review the list to ensure it reflects the community's heritage values.

**STEP 3:** Consult with property owners, if applicable and consider sharing information to raise awareness by such means as:

- preparing clear and simple information packages (explain that register status is not the same as designation status);
- preparing a map of heritage properties;
- assembling available information (such as before and after restoration photos, maps, archival material, inventories, etc.);
- holding a review meeting or workshop;
- explaining eligibility criteria for financial assistance for conservation; and/or
- offering technical assistance (e.g., design advice or rehabilitation standards).

**STEP 4:** Review, and, if necessary, revise the proposed Community Heritage Register (for LTC consideration and decision).

**STEP 5:** By resolution, establish or add to a Community Heritage Register (for LTC decision).

**STEP 6:** Develop a database of Register records and/or post list of records on website.

**STEP 7:** Within 30 days of including a property on the heritage register, LTC to provide notice to the Heritage Branch for inclusion on the BC Register of Historic Places. Historic places that are fully documented, including a Statement of Significance, are added to the Canadian Register of Historic Places by the BC Registrar at the Heritage Branch.

**STEP 8:** Regularly maintain, review, and add to the Register. Properties may be added to, or deleted from, the Community Heritage Register by resolution of the LTC.

Staff recommend holding one workshop with HIRRA and the Community Hall Committee to consider the proposed Eligibility Criteria and the Register together (STEP 2), prior to LTC consideration (STEP 4).

The LTC may also decide to hold one Community Information Meeting (CIM) or one Advisory Planning Commission (APC) referral before making a final resolution to establish the Register (STEP 5). However, including both a CIM *and* an APC referral would go beyond the scope of a minor project. The LTC will be asked to consider their preferred method during STEP 4.

## **Consultation**

### ***First Nations***

Staff recommend sharing information with K'ómoks First Nation (KFN) about the proposed Register process and the Statements of Significance for the three identified historic settler buildings in order to understand if the locations include culturally significant sites within KFN's territory. Should their comments or feedback impact the scope of the project, staff will return to the LTC to consider including the comments as part of the project. Contacting KFN and sharing the draft Statements of Significance with them will be an important early step in this process.

Community Heritage Registers may include archaeological sites and/or sites of First Nations cultural significance. If the LTC is contemplating inclusion of such sites in a Hornby Island Register, extensive and meaningful consultation should be undertaken with local First Nations to ensure that the inclusion of such sites is done - at the very least - with permission and in a culturally respectful manner, if not through direct partnership with KFN. Similarly, if a settler site is to be included where there is known archaeological or cultural interest, a similar approach would be highly recommended. These activities are directly related to ongoing recognition, relationship building, and reconciliation efforts, and are not included in-scope for a minor project.

Staff note that the LTC has endorsed a Major Project proposal for the 2024/2025 fiscal year related to relationship building with K'ómoks First Nation. Should the LTC wish to include relationship building as part of the scope for establishing a Register, then it will require a major project, and the LTC has already identified a major project for next fiscal year so it would be deferred until after that project is completed.

### ***Community Consultation***

In addition to sharing with First Nations early on, the LTC should consult with other affected property owners and tenants of the three buildings under consideration, before drafting and adopting the Register.

**Statutory Requirements**

Section 598 of the LGA obliges local governments to notify the property owner and provincial minister responsible for the Heritage Conservation Act when a Register is created. If a Hornby Island Community Heritage Register is officially established, staff will contact the *Heritage Branch*.

**Rationale for Recommendation**

Staff recommend approving the Community Heritage Register Minor Project Charter v.1 for the following reasons:

- A Register offers a logical, easy, and achievable starting point for Heritage Conservation planning;
- Establishing a Register and adding the three proposed Statements of Significance will support HIRRA in upgrading and restoring well-used historical community buildings; and
- The steps involved are simple and require an achievable scope of work as a minor project within the fiscal year.

**ALTERNATIVES**

The LTC may consider the following alternatives to the staff recommendation:

**1. Revise the Project Charter and Approve as Amended**

The LTC may make revisions to the draft Project Charter as desired. Recommended wording for the resolutions is as follows:

*That the Hornby Island Local Trust Committee revise the Community Heritage Register Minor Project Charter v.1 by \_\_\_\_\_; and,*

*That the Hornby Island Local Trust Committee approve the Community Heritage Register Minor Project Charter v.1 as revised.*

**2. Do not approve the Project Charter**

Staff advise that the implication of this alternative is that HIRRA may be unsuccessful in securing funding for accessibility and capital upgrades, since local government heritage recognition is a requirement for the funding. If selecting this alternative, the LTC would simply not pass a resolution to approve the Project Charter and staff would not initiate a project. However, it is recommended that an explanation be provided to HIRRA CHC if this is the case.

**3. Receive for information**

The LTC may receive the report for information.

**NEXT STEPS**

Submitted By:	Margot Thomaidis, Planner 2	December 1, 2023
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Concurrence:	Renée Jamurat, RPP, MCIP, Regional Planning Manager	December 6, 2023
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**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Draft Community Heritage Register Minor Project Charter v.1
2. Letter from Margaret Birch (HIRRA) with Attached Statements of Significance Dated November 24, 2023

# Hornby Community Heritage Register - Charter v1 **DRAFT**

Hornby Island Local Trust Committee

LTC Endorsement Date: xxxx-xx-xx

**Purpose:** To develop and establish a preliminary Community Heritage Register (CHR) for Hornby Island and add Statements of Significance for three existing buildings: the Community Hall; the Old Schoolhouse; and the Room to Grow building.

**Background:** At the Dec. 10, 2021 LTC meeting, the Hornby Island Residents and Ratepayers Association Community Hall Committee (HIRRA CHC) requested the LTC establish a Community Heritage Register (CHR) for Hornby Island, in order to secure funding through the Comox Valley Regional District's (CVRD's) Hornby Island Heritage Conservation Service Establishment Bylaw No. 317, 2014. A CHR is a cornerstone to a local government's community heritage program. It should be implemented as part of a carefully planned heritage program to achieve clearly stated community goals. At the June 16, 2023 LTC meeting, the LTC requested staff to prepare a Project Charter for a CHR. This project will achieve the basic steps in developing a CHR for the Island and establish a preliminary Community Heritage Register with Eligibility Criteria.

## Deliverables

Establish a preliminary Community Heritage Register for Hornby Island containing three Statements of Significance for settler sites:

- Community Hall
- Old Schoolhouse
- Room to Grow Building

## In Scope

- Research and identify community heritage resources, process, issues, and needs
- Inform K'ómoks First Nation, affected owners, and tenants
- Workshop with HIRRA
- One CIM or one referral to APC
- Draft Register with Eligibility Criteria & Statements of Significance

## Out of Scope

- Review or amendment of OCP and LUB policies and regulations
- Community engagement
- First Nations engagement
- Designation of Heritage Conservation Areas
- Heritage Designation Protection Bylaw

## IAP2 Engagement Level:

- Inform
- Consult
- Involve
- Collaborate

## Workplan Overview

Deliverable/Milestone	Target Date
Draft Project Charter to LTC for consideration	December 13, 2023
Staff to research community heritage issues, needs, and resources and process	February 2024
Share project and site information with K'ómoks First Nation, owners, and tenants of affected sites	Spring 2024
Workshop with HIRRA regarding Eligibility Criteria and Draft Register	Spring 2024
Staff Report to present draft Heritage Register to LTC for review	Spring 2024
One CIM <u>OR</u> one APC Meeting	Summer 2024
Staff Report to present Heritage Register to LTC to establish by resolution	Summer 2024
Staff to provide notice to the <i>Heritage Branch</i> for Inclusion on the BC Register of Historic Places	Fall 2024

## Project Team

Island Planner	Project Manager
Planner 2	Project Support
RPM	Project Sponsor
IT Administration Staff	Administrative Support
IT Mapping Department	Mapping Support
IT Communications Staff	Media/Webpage Support

## Budget

Budget Sources:		
Fiscal	Item	Cost
2024/2025	Workshop venue, materials, and supplies	\$500
	CIM venue, advertising, materials and supplies	\$1000

<b>RPM Approval:</b> <i>Renée Jamurat</i> <b>Date:</b> xxx	<b>LTC Endorsement:</b> Resolution #: <b>Date:</b> xxx
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	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1500</b>

## Delegation Presentation Synopsis – Hornby Island Local Trust Committee for Dec 13, 2023

### Subject: Establishment of a Hornby Island Community Heritage Register - Update

Following the HIRRA Community Hall Committee Delegation presentation, at the Regular Meeting for the Hornby Island Local Trust Committee, on January 20, 2023, the Local Trust Committee (LTC) gave their *“...support to the Community Hall Committee in establishing a Hornby Island Community Heritage Register, by requesting that the Chair write a letter of support to the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD).”*

Subsequently, at the Regular Meeting for the Hornby Island Local Trust Committee, on June 16, 2023, the LTC Committee approved *“...to request staff to prepare a Project Charter for the Community Heritage Register for the 2023/2024 fiscal year, with the scope and objectives to be determined by the Local Trust Committee.”*

The January 2023 LTC Resolution successfully led the Comox Valley Regional District to grant HIRRA with \$5,000, through *Hornby Island Heritage Conservation Heritage Service Bylaw No. 317*, towards development of a Register, specifically for drafting one or two ‘*cultural heritage statements of significance*,’ the necessary first step before a Bylaw/Register can be developed. The Community Hall Committee commissioned a local area heritage consultant to prepare Statements of Significance for the Hornby Island Community Hall, and Hornby’s First School. Copies of these statements accompany this report. Fortunately, some funds remained in the grant, and a third Statement of Significance, for the “Room to Grow,” another publicly used historical building, will be completed by year end.

The Hornby Island Residents and Ratepayers Association’ Community Hall Committee urges the LTC to move forward with this Register project, without further delay. This request was first brought to the attention of the LTC two years ago, when the Community Hall Committee raised the request to establish a community heritage register at the Hornby Island Local Trust Committee meeting on December 10, 2021, when it was added to the project list. And it has been six months since the LTC made its request to staff to develop a project charter for the 2023/2024 fiscal year.

The Community Hall Committee has done everything it can do to assist the LTC and planning staff and hope the project can move forward with the next steps to develop the Register Bylaw. Our committee is prepared to provide whatever ongoing in-kind support to advance this work. Further, we have an opportunity to access further grant support from the CVRD through their Heritage Service Bylaw, for next year, following a discussion of the details this winter.

In closing, we encourage the LTC to advance this work with staff support. It is a small project that will bring valuable social benefits to bettering Hornby’s heritage buildings, specifically the Community Hall. The Hall needs a significant foundation and insulation upgrade, an accessible washroom and other improvements that are overdue. Establishing a Hornby Island Community Heritage Register Bylaw would open HIRRA’s access to significant capital funding opportunities through the 2024/2025 year for much needed and future ongoing structural improvements.

Sincerely

  
Margaret Birch,  
Member, HIRRA, Community Hall Committee

  
cc. HIRRA Executive HIRRA Community Hall Committee

Attachments:

1. Statement of Significance, Hornby Island Community Hall, November 2023
2. Statement of Significance, Hornby Island First School, November 2023

Prepared November 24, 2023

## Statement of Significance

### COMMUNITY HALL

Building Name:	Hornby Island Community Hall
Building Address:	4305 Central Road, Hornby Island, BC V0R 1Z0
Building Owner:	Hornby Island Residents' & Ratepayers' Association (HIRRA)
Building History:	Built 1927; Major Additions 1974, 1982
Current Use:	Community Hall

#### ***Introduction***

The Community Hall has significant heritage value, locally in the context of Hornby Island history and culture and regionally in the context of Pacific Coast vernacular architecture. Built in 1927 as a 25' x 40' hall and radically redesigned in the 1970s and 80s in the Pacific Coast vernacular style, the Community Hall embodies Hornby Island's spirit of civic volunteerism and artistic creativity. The Hall's early history is intertwined with the adjacent Community School property, particularly the Old Schoolhouse. Prominently situated at the junction of Central and Sollans Roads, the Community Hall today is Hornby Island's most distinctive and visible building.

#### ***1922-28 – Planning, Construction, and Opening***

Prior to the opening of the Community Hall in 1928, most of Hornby Island's social life took place in the one-room schoolhouse located on Hornby Island Community School property at the corner of Central and Sollans Roads (Ovanin 1984: 23). "Dances were held there.... Public meetings, church services, political gatherings and entertainment evenings took place at the school and, as the population of the Island increased, the need for a larger public building became apparent" (Smith and Gerow 1988: 39). A committee was struck to build a community hall in 1922.

While volunteers began immediately clearing land at the corner of Central and Sollans Roads, it would be a number of years before construction began. The property was donated by the government and money for lumber was raised by the Social Club, Football Club, Farmers' Institute, and Women's Institute. Indeed, "All the work on the new hall was done by voluntary labor.... Mr. Leon Savoie who ran a boat to Courtenay hauled the lumber free. Harry Carmichael was appointed foreman for the foundation and laid out the work. Each family donated some money" (Corrigall and Arthurs 1978: 41). Construction started in 1927.

The *Comox Argus* newspaper described the June 1928 opening of the Community Hall (Figure 1) as follows: "All Hornby Island was there and a boat-load from Union Bay and Cumberland. The new building is 25' x 40' and was built entirely by volunteer labour. Soon after eight o'clock, the crowd began to arrive. Mr. Savoie brought fifty over from Denman and fourteen came with MLA Dr. McNaughton. After speeches, prizes were awarded for best costumes. Jack Parnell won the Gentlemen's First as a Spanish bullfighter. Then the dancing, with music by Jackson Arthurs and Albert Savoie. There were one hundred and twenty crowded into the new Hall" (Smith and Gerow 1988: 39).



Figure 1. The 25' x 40' peaked-roof Hornby Island Community Hall opened in 1928. Source: Smith and Gerow 1988: 39.

### 1974 – The Round Room Addition

By the early 1970s, population growth had rendered the Community Hall too small. The solution was the Round Room addition, designed by J  Titus, who envisioned a “conical cedar roof hovering over a circle of stone” (Helliwell and McNamara 1978: 473). Limited funds meant “the project had to be labour intensive and use locally available materials: stone to be hand gathered, beach-poles collected for the structure and cedar bolts to be hand-split for the roof shakes.” Construction of the Round Room (Figure 2) began in the spring of 1974. The design called for a “24ft diameter circle of 12 beach log posts, each holding a log rafter radiating from [an] old truck wheel. A piece of salvaged logging cable acts as tension ring to absorb the horizontal thrust. 1½in cedar decking, rigid insulation and shakes, complete the conical roof structure. After foundations, this roof was erected; then came the stone walls and fireplace, windows, and finally, the floor and interior finishing” (1978: 473).



Center hub:  
'56 Ford  
truck tire

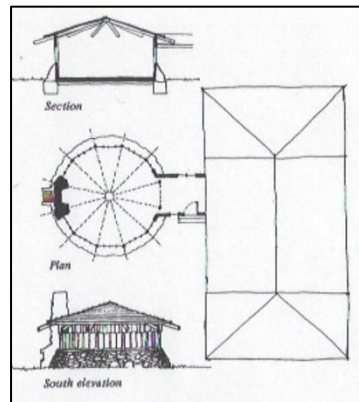
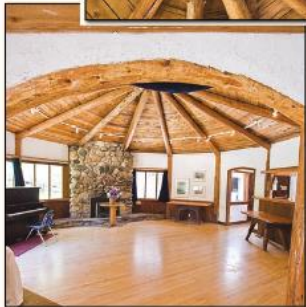


Figure 2. The Round Room was added on to the side of the original hall in 1974. Photo source (left): Kahn 2008: 34. Sketch source (above): Helliwell and McNamara 1978: 473.

### **1982 – The Green Roof Addition**

By the early 1980s, population growth had once again rendered the Hall too small for the community, resulting in the 1982 Green Roof addition/renovation (Figures 3, 4, 5, and 6). Planning started in 1981 and “showed how the old roof could be resupported and the main hall widened so as to form raised aisles or sitting-out spaces along both sides. Altogether the floor area would be increased by almost 50% and, with most of the outside walls new, and a new heating system, the new-old Hall would be ready to start another long life of service to the Island” (Smith 1981: 3). Construction started in 1982 and Anne Ngan provided regular updates in *The First Edition* (Ngan 1982a, 1982b, 1982c).

The addition included three distinctive components: a green roof, a grand entryway made of an upturned stump, and exterior siding made of cut log rounds. Goya Ngan (2014: 6) discusses the Hall’s green roof in light of Hornby Island and North American architectural history: “Green roofs were so common on [Hornby Island] by the early 1980s, that when the Community Hall was expanded, there was no question—it would have a green roof. The members of the design committee, Ernst Snijders, Lloyd House, and Michael McNamara, were all versed in green roofs.” According to Ngan, the initial idea in the 1950s “to put sod on a roof on Hornby Island began with none other than our visionary architect, Arthur Erickson. His design for a modest cabin at Shingle Spit included a green roof” (2014: 5).

Lloyd House describes the origin of the Community Hall’s grand entry: “Bo Helliwel found a huge log on the beach, and said, ‘You better come and look at it, Lloyd.’ We went to the beach and cut the doorway in the log. Then we split it in half, brought the two halves to the site, and put them back together. This was the first thing that was put up. A local said, at the time, ‘We’re all on a journey and nobody knows where we’re going’” (Kahn 2008: 34). House provides this practical explanation for the Hall’s unusual exterior siding (Figure 6): “When we got to the siding we were nearly out of money. So we got scrap logs and cut log rounds on the bias 4 inches thick” (Kahn 2008: 34).





Figure 3. The Hall's exterior today. The peaked roof of the 1927 hall is visible back-right (with skylight). The 1974 Round Room addition is front-left (with chimney). The 1982 Green Roof addition is front-right (with grand entry at centre). Source: HIRRA.



Figure 4. Inside the Main Hall today. Source: HIRRA.

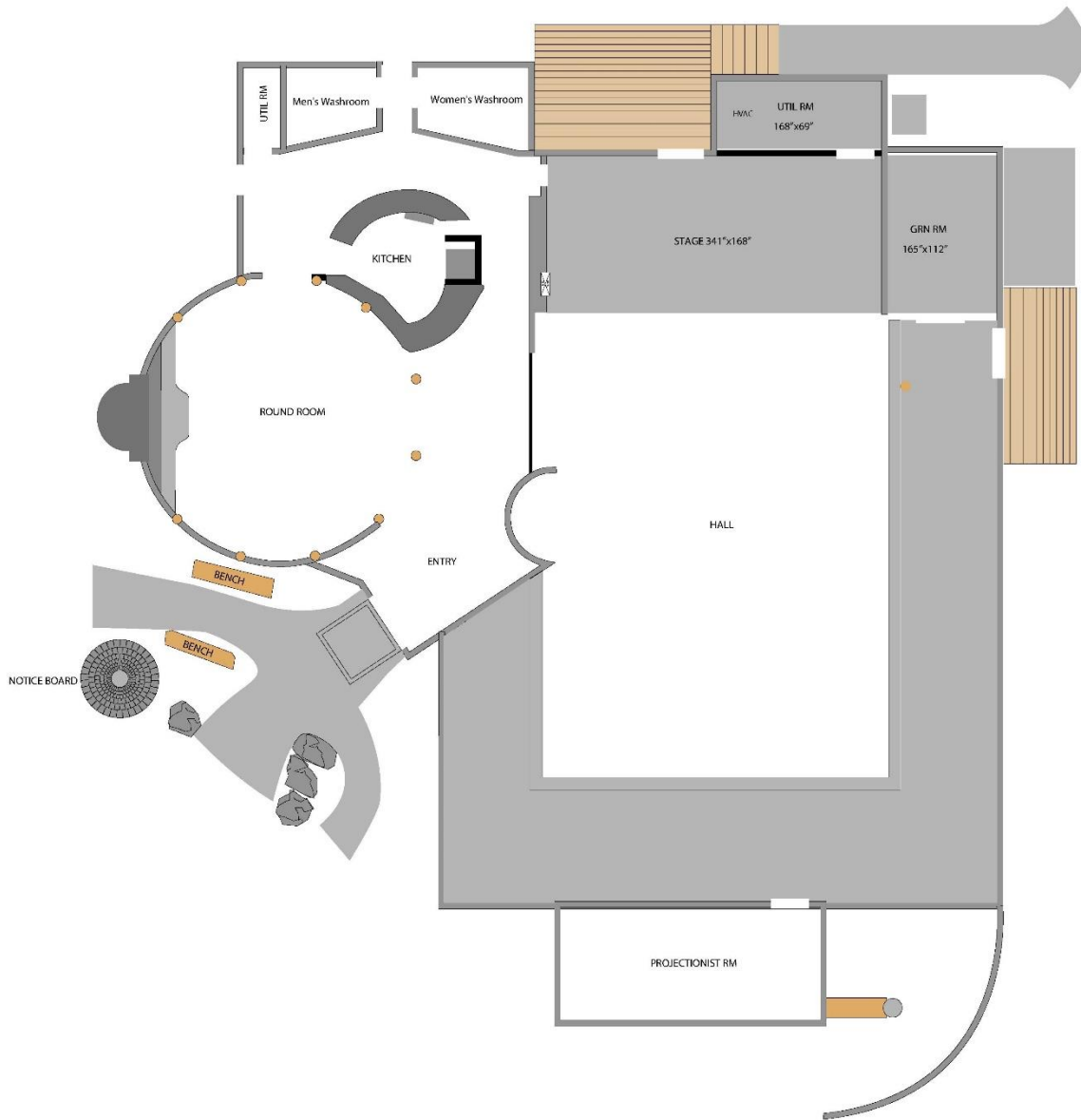


Figure 5. Planview diagram of the Community Hall complex. Source: HIRRA.





Figure 6. Close up view of the log-round exterior siding on the Green Roof addition. Source: Kahn 2008: 34.

### ***Summary***

The Community Hall has significant heritage value, locally in the context of Hornby Island history and culture and regionally in the context of Pacific Coast vernacular architecture. Locally, the Community Hall reflects Hornby Island's spirit of civic volunteerism and artistic creativity. Regionally, the Community Hall exemplifies Pacific Coast vernacular architecture (Helliwell and McNamara 1978; Kahn 2008; Ngan 2014).

The Community Hall's character-defining elements are:

- Central location at the corner of Central and Sollans Roads;
- Vernacular/local design; and
- Public accessibility.

Architectural elements of the Community Hall that exemplify the Pacific Coast vernacular tradition are:

- The Round House addition, including the radial wood roof and stone wall and fireplace, all constructed by locals with locally sourced materials; and
- The Green Roof addition, including the original hall, living roof, grand entryway made of an upturned stump, and exterior siding made of cut log round, all constructed by locals with locally sourced materials.

The Community Hall is living insofar as it represents the work of multiple generations of Hornby Islanders. “‘The Hall,’ as we call it, is a community centre in the truest sense of the word: centrally located, the focus of community spirit, a point from which collective energy radiates. Not only does energy radiate from the Hall, but a considerable amount of energy is put into events held there. But if the Hall is to retain its warm and welcoming atmosphere, some of our energy needs to be directed...to the building itself” (The Recreation Committee 1985: 1).



Figure 7. A public event in the Main Hall. Source: Hornby Island Conservancy.

### ***Postscript***

This statement's narrow scope—geographically and historically—obscures larger regional, social, economic, and political contexts (Hutchings 2017; Hutchings and Williams 2020; Stewart 2017), including the relationship between heritage, architecture, and the social construction of place in settler-colonial contexts (Rayner 1995; Smith 2006; Tucker 2014). Toward this, the author respectfully acknowledges the location of the Hornby Island Community Hall on the Unceded Traditional Territory of the K'ómoks First Nation (KFN 2023).

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Author contact: [rmhutchings@alumni.ubc.ca](mailto:rmhutchings@alumni.ubc.ca)*

## Statement of Significance

### OLD SCHOOLHOUSE

Building Name:	Old Schoolhouse; also known as: Hornby Island School/Preschool; Betty Smith Centre; Fabricators Building
Building Address:	1765 Sollans Road, Hornby Island, BC V0R 1Z0
Building Owner:	Hornby Island New Horizons Society
Building History:	Built 1891; Modified 1972; Relocated 1984; Modified 1993, 1998
Historic Uses:	School 1892-1984; Weaving Centre 1988-present
Current Use:	Hornby Island Fabricators, a weaving and spinning collective

#### ***Introduction***

The Old Schoolhouse has significant heritage value in the context of Hornby Island community history and culture. It is Hornby Island's second oldest standing building<sup>1</sup> and has served as a community education and social centre since its doors opened in 1892. Constructed in 1891 at the corner of Central and Sollans Roads and relocated to its present location at the New Horizons Centre in 1984, the structure has sequentially housed an elementary school (1892-1973), a preschool (1973-84), and a weaving centre (1988-present). Since 1984 the Old Schoolhouse building has been owned and managed by the Hornby Island New Horizons Society, which provides social and educational opportunities for people 50 and older. In 1988, New Horizons named the relocated building the Betty Smith Centre in memory of Hornby Island historian, New Horizons member, schoolteacher, and weaver Elizabeth (Betty) Smith (1901-89). Today the Old Schoolhouse is home to the Fabricators, a weaving and spinning collective.

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<sup>1</sup> The Maude Farmhouse, constructed circa 1875, is still standing as part of the larger Tribune Bay Lodge. The 14-acre Lodge property, located within Tribune Bay Provincial Park, was listed on the BC Register of Historic Places in 1979 and given the provincial heritage designation DjSd-16 (Ovanin 1984: 24; see also <https://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=18066>).



### **1891-1984 – Public School**

Hornby Island's first public school—the Old Schoolhouse—was built in 1891 on a donated one-acre parcel of land at the corner of Central and Sollans Roads.<sup>2</sup> The building, constructed by J.A. Coates of Comox for \$720.00, was commissioned by the newly established Hornby Island School District, formed in 1889. The one-room schoolhouse measured 20' x 34' and consisted of pole floor joists, square nails, a high peaked roof, clapboard, rough lumber, and white paint (Figures 1 and 2).

The school opened for classes in the spring of 1892 and was the social centre of the island until the community hall was built in 1927-28 (Ovanin 1984: 23); "Most of the Island's social life took place in the one-room schoolhouse. Dances were held there.... Public meetings, church services, political gatherings and entertainment evenings took place at the school and, as the population of the Island increased, the need for a larger public building became apparent. In 1922, 'a committee was formed to inquire into the cost of lumber, etc., to erect a community hall'" (Smith and Gerow 1988: 39).

The Old Schoolhouse building was modified in 1972 when an enclosed front porch with a distinctive octagonal window was added (Ovanin 1984: 23). Rectangular windows were added along the sides and rear at the same time. The foundation was replaced, as were the log floor beams (Helliwell and McNamara 1978: 473). Over the next decade, numerous new, larger school buildings were erected around the one-room schoolhouse to accommodate the island's growing student population. Too small to use as a regular classroom, from 1973 to 1984 the building was used by the Hornby Island Daycare Society for a preschool. Figure 3 shows the modified Old School building in 1982, surrounded by the newer, larger school buildings.

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<sup>2</sup> Although sometimes referred to as Hornby Island's "first schoolhouse" (Ovanin 1984: 23), the Old Schoolhouse is technically the island's second school. The first school was constructed circa 1880 near the ferry landing at Shingle Spit under the direction of the Ford family, which had the island's first children (Corrigall and Arthurs 1978: 35). Just as the Shingle Spit school has been referred to as Hornby Island's 'first private school,' the Old Schoolhouse may be considered Hornby Island's first public school.



Figure 1. Old Schoolhouse exterior, circa 1920. Source: Hornby Island Archives Photograph Collection, box 3, file 11, item 2.



Figure 2. Old Schoolhouse interior, circa 1920. Source: Hornby Island Archives Photograph Collection, box 3, file 11, item 1.



Figure 3. The Old Schoolhouse (second from right) in 1982 at its original location and surrounded by newer school buildings. The 1972 modification to the front of the building is clearly visible. Source: Hornby Island Archives Photograph Collection, box 3, file 11, item 13.

### ***1984-present – Relocation and New Horizons***

The Old Schoolhouse was slated for demolition in 1981 to accommodate new school expansion. In response, the Hornby Island New Horizons Society—led by its Archives Committee under the leadership of local historian and New Horizons member Betty Smith—began discussing ways to save the building. On March 15, 1982, New Horizons formally petitioned the District 71 Board of School Trustees in Courtenay (Figure 4). Their letter states: “The Hornby Island New Horizons Society at its regular meeting in February discussed the preservation of the little original school building now being used as a pre-school here. Our members were in unanimous agreement that we should request your Board to ensure that the original building is not destroyed when the new school buildings are erected. If it is necessary to remove the old school we request that it be moved to the New Horizons land and that our Society be responsible for its care and preservation” (Smith and Brown 1982).

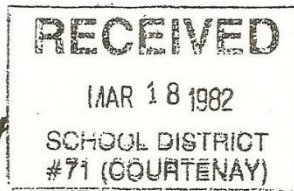
New Horizons’ rationale for preserving the Old Schoolhouse was twofold: (1) it had “educated four generations of Hornby children” as it was an active schoolhouse for 92 consecutive years and (2) “the [School] Board encourages the placing of schools built before 1930 under Heritage designation.” New Horizons maintained the Old Schoolhouse was “definitely a Heritage Building” and it “would be a shame to bulldoze or otherwise destroy this landmark” (Smith and Brown 1982).

In 1984 New Horizons got its wish and the Old Schoolhouse was relocated a few hundred metres up Sollans Road (Figure 5) to its present location in the New Horizons Centre. In 1988, New Horizons honoured Betty Smith’s community works by naming the building the Betty Smith Centre (Figure 6).<sup>3</sup> The building has since been used by the Fabricators, a weaving and spinning collective (Figure 7).

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<sup>3</sup> For a biography of Elizabeth (Betty) Walker Smith, nee Paterson (1901-89), see [https://hornbyislandarchives.ca/finding\\_aids/betty-smith-collection/](https://hornbyislandarchives.ca/finding_aids/betty-smith-collection/). Smith taught in the Old Schoolhouse for a single year in 1921 (Smith and Gerow 1984: 21).

*Hornby Island  
New Horizons Society*



Hornby Library Cen.  
Solon Road  
Hornby Island, B.C.  
VOR 1Z0

March 15, 1982.

Mr William Burns,  
Secretary-Treasurer,  
District 71 Board of School Trustees,  
Courtenay, B.C.

Dear Mr Burns,

The Hornby Island New Horizons Society at its regular meeting in February discussed the preservation of the little original school building now being used as a pre-school here. Our members were in unanimous agreement that we should request your Board to ensure that this original building is not destroyed when the new school buildings are erected. If it is necessary to remove the old school we request that it be moved to the New Horizons land and that our Society be responsible for its care and preservation.

The little school presently occupied by the pre-school children was built where it stands in 1891 and has educated four generations of Hornby children to date. Last October we hosted a reunion of pioneer Hornby students and realized how much the little building was a part of Hornby, both for schooling and community enjoyment.

We know that your Board encourages the placing of schools built before 1930 under Heritage designation. This is definitely a Heritage Building and we feel that it would be a shame to bulldoze or otherwise destroy this landmark. On the other hand we recognize that more space is required for the expanding school population today.

The New Horizons land is close to the School property. It consists of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  acres of land, ample space on which to put the old school building if it has to be moved. Our Society would then restore it to its former appearance and use it as a museum.

Our society now has a lovely debt-free building comprised of a large cosy well-furnished recreation room with a large fireplace, and a splendid library of which we are justly proud. We are in the process of enlarging the building to take care of an archives section, kitchen and an office. The library will be expanded to make room for a special children's section. The archives is being built according to accepted archives standards.

The little school we understand is the oldest school in British Columbia being used for children learning. Our society would be glad to cooperate with you in its preservation.

cc. David Gerow.  
H.I. Education Society  
Hornby Island Trust .

Yours sincerely,

Betty Smith - Archives Committee.  
Hilary Brown - President.

*Betty Smith* - *Hilary Brown*  
P.P.

Figure 4. Letter dated March 15, 1982, from New Horizons Society to District 71 Board of School Trustees petitioning for the preservation of the Old Schoolhouse. Hornby Island Archives/New Horizons Collection.





Figure 5. Relocating the Old Schoolhouse with truck, 1984. The 1972 modifications (front entry and windows) are clearly visible. Hornby Island Archives/New Horizons Collection.



Figure 6. The Old Schoolhouse was named the Betty Smith Centre at this event in 1988. Betty Smith is seated at far right. Photo by Bob Cain, 1988.



Figure 7. Members of the Fabricators collective working in the Old Schoolhouse today. Photo by R.M. Hutchings, 2023.

The Old Schoolhouse was modified twice in the 1990s. In 1993 a room measuring 12' x 20' was added to the back of the building, along with a small deck. This modification is detailed in a Fabricators' heritage photo album dated 1993. In 1998, a composting toilet/bathroom was added to the back end of the 1993 addition.

Based on its current appearance (Figure 8), New Horizons has lived up to its promise to care for and preserve the Old Schoolhouse. The building's history is recognized on a commemorative plaque on the front door that identifies it as the Betty Smith Centre and Hornby's Original Schoolhouse (Figure 9).



Figure 8. Outside of the Old Schoolhouse today. Photo by M. Birch, 2023.



One Fabricator interviewed for this project described (1) being brought up the road from school to the building in the 1990s for an introductory lesson in spinning and weaving, (2) subsequently joining the collective, and then (3) witnessing their own children participate the same field trip a generation later.



Figure 9. Commemorative plaque on the front door of the Old Schoolhouse. Photo by R.M. Hutchings, 2023.

### ***Summary***

The Old Schoolhouse is the embodiment of Hornby Island community heritage, particularly as it relates to education and the transmission of local cultural knowledge. The Old Schoolhouse:

- is the second oldest standing building on Hornby Island (built 1891);
- served as a public-school building for 92 consecutive years (1892-1984); and
- has served as a community education centre for 131 consecutive years (1892-present).

The building's character-defining elements are:

- One-room building measuring 20' x 34';
- High peaked roof;
- Front entry with distinctive octagonal window; and
- Location on Sollans Road near its original site.

### ***Postscript***

This statement's narrow scope—geographically and historically—obscures larger regional, social, economic, and political contexts (Hutchings 2017; Hutchings and Williams 2020; Stewart 2017), including the relationship between heritage, architecture, and the social construction of place in settler-colonial contexts (Rayner 1995; Smith 2006; Tucker 2014). Toward this, the author respectfully acknowledges the location of the Old Schoolhouse on the Unceded Traditional Territory of the K'ómoks First Nation (KFN 2023).



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