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LANDMARKS



J.W. Morris residence, 1558 Beach Drive

Barry F. King

Oak panelling, stained glass featured in Morris home

Geoffrey Castle

Oak Bay Grocery (now the Blethering Place), and the J.W. Morris residence on Beach Drive (formerly Mount Baker Avenue).

The latter commission was let in 1912 when John Morris, a stockbroker, decided to build a fine home overlooking Oak Bay and distant Mount Baker. The 38 lots served by Prospect Place at the rear of the house were of varying sizes and carved out of land purchased by Rattenbury in 1898. As fewer than a third of them were built upon, a rural setting prevailed.

The exterior of the new three-storey house with basement featured granite veneering as far as the second floor on two sides of the building. This was complemented with wood shingling and half timbering. Inside, oak panelling graced the hall, stairway and dining room. The library was provided with fir panelling. Ten fireplaces justified having four chimneys and the structure, which cost \$25,000, incorporated plenty of stained

and leaded glass, much of which can easily be seen from Prospect Place.

A change of ownership occurred in 1934 when Cecelia Reade moved in. Mrs. Reade, a widow, owned the Mount Edward Apartments on Vancouver Street (now a senior citizen care centre), which her husband built over 20 years earlier.

It was in 1948 that the new owners, Clarence ("Clare") and Catherine Moore, tastefully converted their lovely home to six suites of varying sizes and named them the Garden Mansion Apartments. Moore, a retired Winnipeg restaurateur, would work alongside the carpenters to ensure that the perfection he desired would be achieved. Although some minor changes to the porches and interior walls were necessary, the original appearance was virtually unchanged.

The size and appearance of the attractive grounds have been preserved and the viability of the apartments will ensure that the building will help maintain the charm and tranquility of an exclusive pocket in the heart of Oak Bay.

Geoffrey Castle is past president of the Victoria section of the B.C. Historical Federation.

Much has been said and written about two particular Victoria architects — Francis M. Rattenbury and Samuel Maclure. Rattenbury, who was happiest with non-residential work, is synonymous with the Parliament Buildings and the Empress Hotel. Maclure, on the other hand, who designed several hundred good quality homes, including Hatley Park, undertook little commercial work. Both employed aspiring architects.

One of these, Douglas James, worked for Maclure before he entered into a partnership with his brother, Percy Leonard James. By 1910, they had an office, as did Rattenbury and Maclure, in the Five Sisters Building (named for the five surviving daughters of Sir James Douglas) located on the northeast corner of Government and Fort streets.

The firm of James and James designed both homes and other buildings in the Tudoresque style often identified with Samuel Maclure. Among their work in Oak Bay around the same time were St. Mary's Church on Elgin Street, the