



The Finlayson house, 2391 Beach Drive

Barry F. King

Owner of elegant Maclure home didn't live to enjoy it

What makes the Finlayson house on Beach Drive special is its triple significance. First, there is the original owner's important historical connection; second, the landmark design of the house by architect Samuel Maclure; and, third, the delightful location in Oak Bay with unobstructed sea and mountain vistas.

R. D. Finlayson was one of the 11 children of Roderick and Sarah Finlayson. Roderick was born at Loch Alsh, Scotland, in 1818. In 1837, he joined the Hudson's Bay Company and was sent to Victoria when the fort was built in 1843. He was placed in charge when Charles Ross died the following year. Finlayson obtained a great amount of land and built a mansion on Douglas Street, near Bay Street. It was on Finlayson's initiative that City Hall was built—for a cost of nearly \$10,000—and he became mayor of Victoria by acclamation in 1877.

Finlayson's son, Roderick Jr., worked

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with the drygoods firm of Turner Beeton and Company. When his father died in 1892, he concentrated on managing the huge family estate and, in 1914, engaged architect Samuel Maclure to design a Tudor style home for him and his family, near Maclure's own home (since demolished).

With the onset of the war and fewer commissions, Maclure had the time to produce stunning results, enhanced by 20 years of development experience in the particular idiom. The plans called for many special features which included an inglenook tiled fireplace under the staircase with wood panelling above the mantelpiece. The rest of the main floor consisted of a den with fireplace and built-in bookshelves, large drawing room with a bay window and an adjoining sunroom; a library and a dining room, both with fireplaces; and a wash-

room, kitchen with pantry and larder; and servants' quarters.

Some exterior features are a porte cochere, leaded casement windows, current brick-colored stucco walls, flat-top dormers, half-timbered gable above the landing windows and a gable on the rear of the house. There are four brick chimneys and a sleeping porch overlooking the beach.

The large, desirable property enjoys marvellous views of the sea and mountains. Immaculate grounds stretch towards the Esplanade and the prime location is an important consideration.

It is unfortunate that R.D. Finlayson did not live to enjoy his lovely home. He died in 1916. It is a different matter with the Pendrays who lived there for four decades. Carl Pendray was president of Bapco Paint Company, which is why this fine residence is better known as the Pendray house.

Geoffrey Castle is past president of the Victoria Historical Society.