



649 Admirals Road

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LANDMARKS

Trafalgar: heritage home for people of renown

One of the important criteria used when a home receives heritage designation is consideration of noteworthy former occupants. Trafalgar, at 649 Admirals Road, is no exception.

The rambling colonial-type structure with dormers and extensive verandahs stands in half an acre overlooking Esquimalt Harbor. It was built in 1900 for Reverend William Bolton, founding principal of University School (Now St. Michael's University School). His wife, Agnes Hane (Bushby) was a granddaughter of Sir James Douglas, who founded Fort Victoria in 1843. Bolton was a life-long athlete and celebrated his 85th birthday with a 40-mile hike.

In the mid-Thirties, Reverend Reginald Walker and his wife, Lady Emily, daughter of Lord Hereford, lived at Trafalgar. Lady Emily, a descendant of Lady Jane Seymour (a wife of Henry VIII) entertained His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, at Ragley, her home at East

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Sooke, in August, 1927. Lady Emily's brother, Lord Henry Seymour, was a close friend of the prince.

It was in 1970 that the late architect, Peter Neve Cotton, acquired the house, renovated it and obtained heritage designation. Cotton will be remembered for his part in the restoration of the Emily Carr House, the Law Chambers, Counting House and Craigflower Manor. Among his other projects were the exterior restoration of St. Andrew's Cathedral and making drawings for the restoration of the Synagogue.

Born in Merritt in 1918, Cotton grew up in New Westminster and during the Second World War served overseas in British Army Intelligence, attaining the rank of captain. Upon return from active duty, he pursued architectural studies at the University of British Columbia. He

attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and studied art history at the University of Victoria. He designed and manufactured Perpetua furniture in his Vancouver factory and took a position with the provincial government where he worked on the rebuilding of Government House, which burned in 1957.

Peter Cotton's imagination and understanding have left their mark. As chairman of Victoria's Heritage Advisory Committee, he fought to save many historic buildings. He worked with the Cool-Aid group and was interested in drama and helped turn the old Baptist Church on Fernwood into the Belfry Theatre.

Although Cotton, a bachelor, died five years ago, his papers, notes and drawings in the Provincial Archives help preserve the memory of this great humanist.

Geoffrey Castle is a council member of the Victoria section of the B.C. Historical Federation.