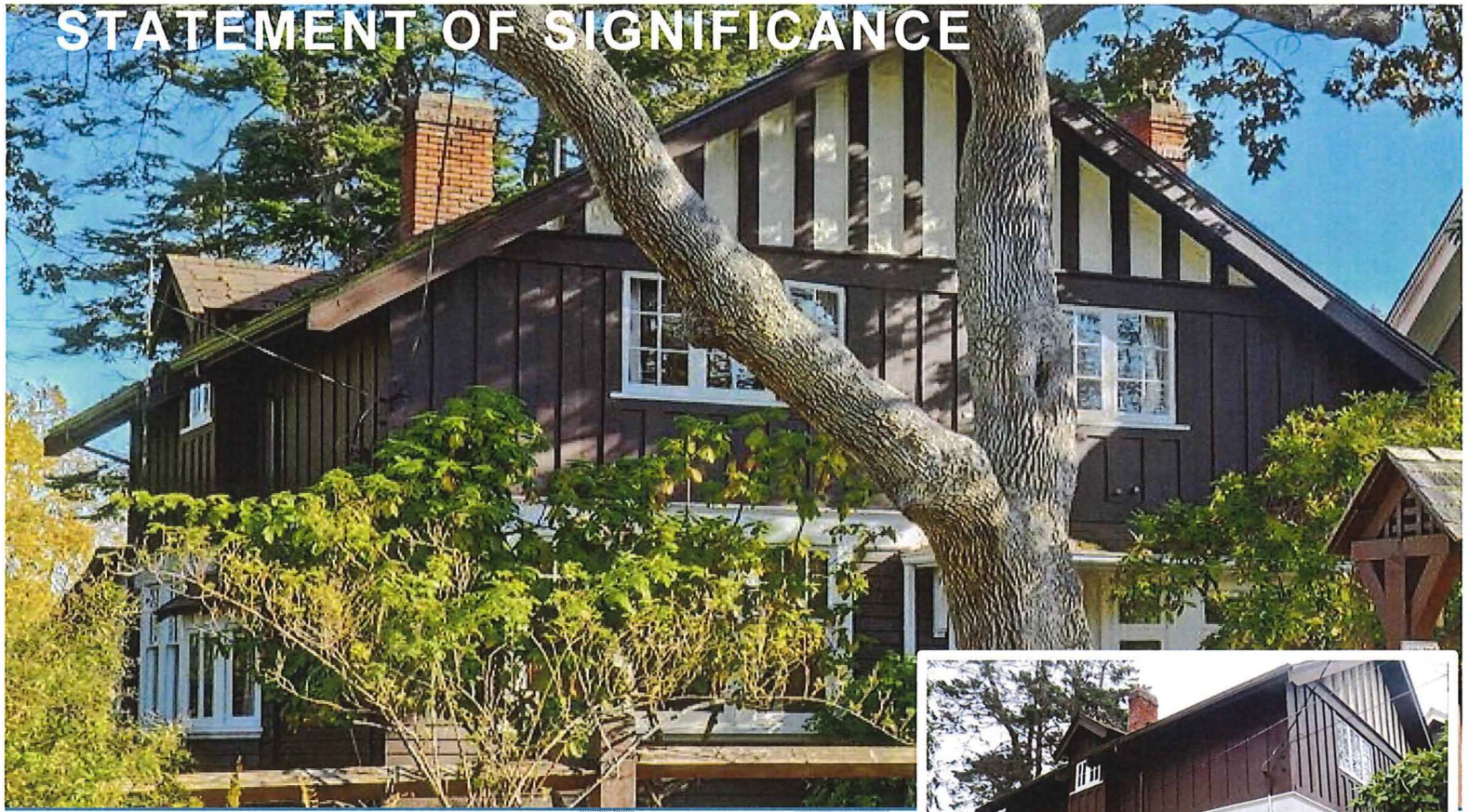


STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE



785 Island Road

LOCATION

785 Island Road District of Oak Bay
PID 000 427 144

DESCRIPTION

Constructed in 1912 by architect KB Spurgin, 785 Island Road is a two storey wood frame cottage located in southeast Oak Bay. Supported on a concrete foundation, the house is clad with a combination of divided stucco, board and batten and horizontal siding, and has a variety of significant wood frame windows.



HERITAGE VALUE

The values of 785 Island Road are found in its early contribution to the development of the municipality of Oak Bay, the preservation of the original detailing and assembly materials, and its inhabitants.

The original single storey bungalow was constructed in 1912, six years after the incorporation of Oak Bay and during the latter years of the land boom period that saw much of the municipality planned and divided into lots but still generally undeveloped. Just seven years later in 1919, the house was renovated to add a second storey and alter the roof form; both reflecting the growing popularity of the Craftsman style.

The exterior cladding, windows, and a number of interior rooms appear to be preserved from the 1919 renovation. The front roof gable is clad with 'half timber' divided stucco, while the second storey is

Character Defining Elements

Key elements that define the heritage character of 785 Island Road include:

- + An early example of a modest Oak Bay residence
- + The historic exterior finishes dating to the time of construction
- + The original wood frame windows including fine examples of Road and Quarrelled, leaded glass panes
- + The front entrance door with the bullseye lites
- + The historic, interior finishes dating from the time of construction including the wainscoting, ceiling trim, fireplaces and wood floors
- + The continued use as a private residence

finished in board and batten planks above the horizontal bevel siding on the ground floor. The windows include hung, casement, and awning operables incorporating leaded, rose and multi lite panes with wood muntins. The main entrance door is accentuated with six crown glass bullseye lites.

The front room to which the entrance leads is substantially original, featuring dark wood batten trim with embossed wallpaper and a bold chair rail. Drop 'beams' accentuate the ceiling.

A built in bench fills the far corner while the space between the stair rail and ceiling is infilled with a decorative coloured and leaded glass pane. The main fireplace supports a plaque with an old Scottish quote, 'Thai haif said : Quhat Say Thai : Lat thame Say'.

The adjacent sitting and dining rooms are lighter spaces with painted white, drop 'beam' ceilings and built in, glazed cabinets. Set in the exterior wall is a coal burning fireplace trimmed in glazed tile.

The upstairs still has original fir flooring, another tile trimmed, coal burning fireplace above the same on the lower floor, and the original cast radiators throughout.

The house was built and renovated by Karl Spurgin for himself. Born in 1877, Karl pursued the field of architecture, receiving his training and apprenticeship in England before emigrating to Canada to eventually open his own practice in 1912 at the age of 35. After serving for four years in World War I, he returned to the island to work on a number of important commissions in Oak Bay over the following 25 years.

Another notable family that resided in 785 Island Road was the Keiths. Henry G Keith, a forester and plant collector, has portions of his collection on display in the Natural History Museum and Kew Gardens in London, while his wife Agnes had several books published including one on the families' internment in a Japanese POW camp, which was later developed into a movie.

CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

1 Building

ARCHITECT OR BUILDER

Name

Karl Spurgin
Henry Keith and Agnes Keith

Type

Architect / Owner
Owner

FORMAL RECOGNITION

Type

Heritage Register
Owner Response

Bylaw

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY

Private

ASSOCIATED DATES

Type

Construction

From

1912

Date

File

AUTHOR

John Dam & Associates