



Legger - Franklin

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH [1912]

1411 Quadra at Fisgard

Balmoral

ARCHITECT: J. C. MALCOLM KEITH

The Presbyterian community on Vancouver Island dates from the early missionary work of the Rev. John Hall, sent out under the sponsorship of the Dublin Presbytry of the Irish Presbyterian Church. The first church was built on the corner of Blanshard and Pandora, according to plans drawn up by the firm of Wright and Saunders. Then there were vicissitudes and fluctuations of membership: the burning of the church in 1883; and the construction of a new church designed by John Teague; the splitting of the congregation and the formation of another congregation at St Andrew's; the use of the Church building by the burned-out Anglicans between 1869 and 1872; and the use of the church for the famous ecclesiastical trial of Dean Cridge. So, by August, 1911, the Presbyterians were again ready to build. J. C. Malcolm Keith was commissioned to plan and supervise construction of what was to be a multi-stage building program.

The business failure of the contractors protracted the building time and also the cost of the hall, which rose from \$21,570 to \$34,000. On May 11, 1913, the inaugural services were held in the hall and Mr. Keith was authorized to proceed with the main church structure. The entire project was to cost \$130,000. Luney Brothers contracted to excavate the site and the erection of the new building was carried out by Steven's Brothers. A number of ancillary contracts included that with the Berlin Interior Hardwood Co. of Berlin, Ontario: they manufactured the furnishings, accidentally making the side pews one foot too short, as they are to this day. The new church was opened on Sunday, May 2, 1915.