

1991 Hallmark Award of Merit

Shelagh N. Mahony-Hall
for the restoration of 1458 Begbie Street
-photo by Jennifer Lort

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RESEARCH

AWARDS NIGHT RESEARCH INVENTORY

BY HEATHER MORGAN

Name and Address of Award Winner:

1458 Begbie St.
Shelagh Hall
592-6032

Name of Owner(s):

Alex Charles Ewart

Date of Construction: 1894

Architect: Alex Charles Ewart

History of Building (past owners, past uses, historical associations):

$\frac{1}{2}$ storey

- Queen Anne Revival style displaying:
- asymmetrical composition
 - a series of gables using board & batten
 - textured shingles and horizontal siding on exterior walls
 - decorative detailing including:
 - a sunburst motif
 - turned porch posts
 - stained glass windows

SEE ATTACHED "History" SHEET

Date of Purchase by Present Owner(s):

Jan. 1986 / Heritage Designation 1987

Condition of Building When Purchased:

A badly neglected boarding house displaying much structural remuddling over the years.
Dirty, peeling paint, unattended garden filled with garbage
Aluminium windows, rotting porch, gutters
Repair and Restoration History (architects, designers, tradespeople involved in restoration work):

SEE ATTACHED "REPAIR & RESTORATION" SHEET

SEE ATTACHED "Future Plans" SHEET

Reminder: historical photos: Before, After, and During.

Interviewed by: Heather Morgan

Date: April 12/91

History:

(NO HISTORICAL PHOTOS)

- assessment rolls have determined that the house was built for Alex Charles Ewart in 1894
- Ewart was practising as an architect at this date so he was probably responsible for the design of the house.
- prior to 1894 he was employed by John Teague
- Ewart is credited with the design of the British America Paint Company factory (now demolished), the Simon Leiser Building (524 Yates St.) 1896 and a number of Victoria residences. He later moved to Nelson where he designed many commercial and residential structures.
- The second owner was the Rev. Joseph McCoy who resided in the house from 1912 to his death in 1927.

Repair & Restoration

- 1986 - moved into a suite in the house and began cleaning, removing garbage and landscaping to create an English country garden
- 1987 - heritage designation from City of Victoria
- rotten porch floor boards replaced
 - 1950's panelling covering the siding of the porch was removed.
 - a contemporary front door was replaced by a more sympathetic one
- 1988 - aluminium windows were replaced by double hung Sashes (12 lights over 2), Vintage Woodworks used two surviving original windows at the side of the house to duplicate the rest
- drop siding was repaired where necessary
 - a stained glass window for the upper floor was fabricated using an original in the entrance hall as a model.
 - a Victorian style fence and gate were installed across the front of the property along with paving stones and the driveway was resurfaced.
- 1989 - the house was painted in its original Victorian 5 colour scheme, researched and presented by Stuart Stark. Ken Horne did the actual painting work.
- 1990 - the chimneys were repointed and an asphalt roof was replaced by a cedar shingle one.
- at this point rotten eaves, soffits and gutters were replaced

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Future Plans

- restoration of garage/coachhouse
using an identical paint scheme and new
cedar shingle roof
- handrail for porch
- 2 rose arbours
- drain tile
- interior work eg picture rails
base boards
wall papering

SHELAGH HALL

X
Fernwood was once a pastoral neighbourhood, known for its fine houses and summer cottages. Many of the quiet streets have survived but Begbie Street is now a major thorough-fare cutting through the once quiet suburb. Not everyone will undertake the restoration of a heritage home, but it takes a special kind of person to take on a house which presents the additional challenge of now fronting on a busy arterial (street).

Alex Charles Ewart practised as an architect in Victoria from 1889 to 1900, first as an employee of John Teague and later on his own. He is best known as the architect of the Simon Leiser Building. He later moved to Nelson where many of his buildings, both commercial and residential survive.

X
After going into private practice he built his own house, in the Queen Anne Style, at 1458 Begbie Street. Asymmetrically massed the house rises through a series of gables and decorative details to the roofline. The mixture of board and batten, textured shingles and horizontal siding creates a superb example of this picturesque style. The sunburst motif repeated in the gable detailing was a favorite symbol of the English Aesthetic Movement.

After Ewart left Victoria, the house changed hands a number of times, slowly sank into disrepair and eventually became a rooming house. The rich architectural detailing was obscured beneath a monochromatic paint job and unsympathetic remodelling. The original wooden windows were removed and replaced by aluminium units. Sadly neglected in an overgrown yard, the house faded into obscurity and did not garner a second glance from the passing motorists.

Sheila Hall recognized the potential of the building from the real estate photo and purchased it sight unseen in 1986. She took up residence in a suite in the house and began the rehabilitation with a major clean-up. In 1987 the house received heritage designation from the City of Victoria. During that year the 1950's panelling which obscured the front porch was removed, rotten floor boards replaced and a modern front door was replaced by a more historically accurate one.

X
In 1988, Vintage Woodworks used 2 surviving windows to duplicate the wooden double hung 12 over 2 sashes. Siding was repaired and a missing stained glass window was replicated using an original from the entrance hall as a model. A Victorian style fence and gate were installed and more landscaping was undertaken. In 1989 the most dramatic and traffic-stopping part of the refurbishment was undertaken. X With the help of a Victoria Heritage Foundation grant, the house was repainted in its original Victorian five colour scheme. X This was researched by Stuart Stark and painted by Scotia Painting. X In the following year, the asphalt shingles were replaced with cedar ones and rotten eaves, X soffits and gutters were replaced. The chimneys were also repointed.

Future plans include more landscaping and interior restoration. X Although the house has lost its pastoral setting, its dignity and grace have returned. Sheila Hall has brought 1458 Begbie back from a state of obscurity and neglect, and it is once again an eye-catching landmark. X