

JUBILEE JUNCTION:

The Uplands is Born

BY LEE JAMESON

An article in the Daily Colonist, March 2, 1910 reports that Andrew Wright, with a Winnipeg firm of Oldfield, Kirby and Gardner was awaiting provincial

government ratification to enable Oak Bay to guarantee that the assessment of property would remain unchanged for 10 years in a new subdivision they were planning called The Uplands.

The company guaranteed in return, to spend \$250,000 on the project immediately and over \$500,000 when completed.

This was the start of one of the most luxurious model residential neighbourhoods in Canada.

Some 12 miles of road were to be built with boulevards, sewers,

water lines and underground wiring.

The B.C. Electric had agreed to extend the streetcar line from Willows to the circular roundabout in the heart of the development.

The Olmstead brothers were the landscape architects and must have been well aware of the value of existing tree; for Harry Barnes who was born in Oak Bay recalls one of the "chain men" who were measuring the roads, telling his family that "they had instructions that if any major trees were in the way, then the road was to be altered to save them."

The 465 acres were bought from the Hudson Bay Co., which had maintained a produce farm on some of the property for many years.

The sheltered anchorage on the south end of Cadboro Bay had been used as a wharf for many years and by this time the Royal Victoria Yacht Club had moved to its present location.

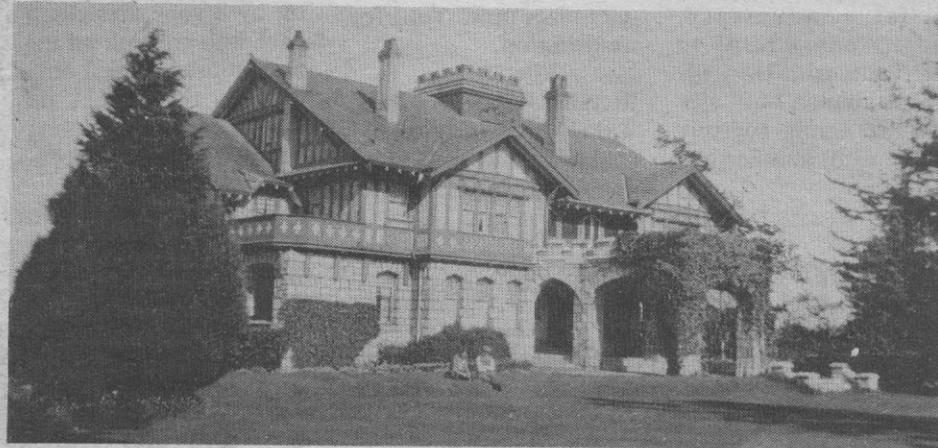
It is the only non-residential institution in the area and has always been considered an asset to the citizens.

Andrew Wright started to build his residence, later to be called Riffington, in 1911 before the roads

lots went on sale in 1912. They ranged in size for 1/2 to 2.5 acres and were priced from \$2,000 to \$35,750.

The Uplands Company has been changed and refinanced several times. It was not until 1974 when the south end of Sussex Rd. was built and subdivided that the original plan was completely developed.

The Uplands Park of approximately 65 acres was bought by the municipality in 1946 when Mayor Walter Walker was in office. This has been left as a wild life sanctuary other than the war memorial that has a small formal



Andrew Wright's house--"Riffington."

were built. All the material for the mansion was brought in to shore by barge.

The Wrights lived here until Andrew Wright's death in the late 1930's.

Andrew Wright Jr. moved to the coach house and the main residence was rented out to the American Attache. The property was later sold to H.B. Wallace who maintains it in beautiful condition.

The Uplands Company Charter gave them control over the size of building to be erected.

garden.

The boat ramps on the water front provide a convenience for small boat fishermen and the road is used extensively by Strollers who pause on our waterfront to enjoy the ever changing views.

The close proximity of schools, the golf and yacht club and ease of traffic to downtown Victoria make the Uplands an ideal place to live and the care and concern of the residents make it one of the most beautiful areas in Canada.