

# AGENDA

## *REGULAR MEETING OF COUNCIL*

**Monday, April 11, 2016**

**7:00 p.m.**

**Council Chamber, Municipal Hall**

**355 West Queens Road,**

**North Vancouver, BC**

**Council Members:**

Mayor Richard Walton

Councillor Roger Bassam

Councillor Mathew Bond

Councillor Jim Hanson

Councillor Robin Hicks

Councillor Doug MacKay-Dunn

Councillor Lisa Muri



NORTH VANCOUVER  
DISTRICT

[www.dnv.org](http://www.dnv.org)

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## REGULAR MEETING OF COUNCIL

**7:00 p.m.**  
**Monday, April 11, 2016**  
**Council Chamber, Municipal Hall,**  
**355 West Queens Road, North Vancouver**

### AGENDA

#### BROADCAST OF MEETING

- Live broadcast on Shaw channel 4
- Re-Broadcast on Shaw channel 4 at 9:00 a.m. Saturday
- Online at [www.dnv.org](http://www.dnv.org)

#### CLOSED PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS NOT AVAILABLE FOR DISCUSSION

- Bylaw 7984 – Rezoning 3568-3572 Mt. Seymour Parkway
- Bylaw 8149 – Rezoning 115 and 123 West Queens Road
- Bylaw 8159 – OCP 1103, 1109, 1123 Ridgewood Drive & 3293 Edgemont Boulevard
- Bylaw 8160 – Rezoning 1103, 1109, 1123 Ridgewood Drive & 3293 Edgemont Boulevard

#### 1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

##### 1.1. April 11, 2016 Regular Meeting Agenda

*Recommendation:*

THAT the agenda for the April 11, 2016 Regular Meeting of Council for the District of North Vancouver be adopted as circulated, including the addition of any items listed in the agenda addendum.

#### 2. PUBLIC INPUT

(limit of three minutes per speaker to a maximum of thirty minutes total)

#### 3. PROCLAMATIONS

##### 3.1. Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week – April 17-25, 2016

p. 9

#### 4. RECOGNITIONS

#### 5. DELEGATIONS

- 5.1. Ms. Rebecca Morris, Alzheimer Society of BC**  
Re: Overview of the Alzheimer Society of BC's Dementia-Friendly Communities initiative.

**p. 13-58**

**6. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

**7. RELEASE OF CLOSED MEETING DECISIONS**

- 7.1. April 4, 2016 Closed Special Meeting of Council**  
File No. 01.0360.20/076.000

**7.1.1. Board of Variance**

THAT Mr. Guy Akester and Mr. Lee Gavel be appointed to the Board of Variance for three year terms ending December 31, 2018.

**North Vancouver Public Art Advisory Committee**

THAT Mr. Al Saunders be re-appointed to the North Vancouver Public Art Advisory Committee for a three year term ending December 31, 2018;

AND THAT Ms. Kate Murray be appointed to the North Vancouver Public Art Advisory Committee for a three year term ending December 31, 2018.

**8. COUNCIL WORKSHOP REPORT**

**9. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL OR STAFF**

With the consent of Council, any member may request an item be added to the Consent Agenda to be approved without debate.

If a member of the public signs up to speak to an item, it shall be excluded from the Consent Agenda.

*Recommendation:*

THAT items \_\_\_\_\_ be included in the Consent Agenda and be approved without debate.

- 9.1. Request for Council Contingency Fund Grant – Blue Cabin Remediation**  
File No. **p. 61-143**

*Recommendation:*

THAT the expenditure of up to \$10,000 from the Council Contingency Fund is granted to the Blue Cabin Committee to assist with the remediation costs of the Blue Cabin.

**10. REPORTS**

**10.1. Mayor**

**10.2. Chief Administrative Officer**



**10.3. Councillors**

**10.4. Metro Vancouver Committee Appointees**

**11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**12. ADJOURNMENT**

*Recommendation:*

THAT the April 11, 2016 Regular Meeting of Council for the District of North Vancouver be adjourned.

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## PROCLAMATIONS

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## PROCLAMATION

### “Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week”

April 17 – 25, 2016

- WHEREAS:** There are currently just under 500 people in BC waiting for an organ transplant, and more than 5,000 British Columbians that have already received the gift of life through organ donation since 1968; and
- WHEREAS:** there is an increasing need to raise awareness of the shortage of organ donors, and to acknowledge the families that demonstrate their compassion by sharing the precious gift of life with others; and
- WHEREAS:** there are volunteer groups within our community, like the BC region of the Canadian Transplant Association, that are dedicated to the support of pre and post-transplant patients, and to informing the public of the need for organ and tissue donations.
- THEREFORE I,** Richard Walton, Mayor of the District of North Vancouver, do hereby proclaim April 17 – 25, 2016 as “National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week” and April 2016 as “National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Month” in the District of North Vancouver.

Richard Walton  
MAYOR

Dated at North Vancouver, BC  
This 11<sup>th</sup> day of April 2016

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## DELEGATIONS

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## Delegation to Council Request Form

District of North Vancouver  
Clerk's Department  
355 West Queens Rd, North Vancouver, BC V7N 4N5

Questions about this form: Phone: 604-990-2311  
Form submission: Submit to address above or Fax: 604.984.9637

**COMPLETION:** To ensure legibility, please complete (type) online then print. Sign the printed copy and submit to the department and address indicated above.

**Delegations have five minutes to make their presentation. Questions from Council may follow.**

Name of group wishing to appear before Council: Alzheimer Society of B.C.

Title of Presentation: Becoming a Dementia-Friendly Community

Name of person(s) to make presentation: Maria Przydatek

Purpose of Presentation:

- ☐ Information only  
☐ Requesting a letter of support  
☒ Other (provide details below)

Please describe:

Attach separate sheet if additional space is required

Delegation will provide an overview of the Alzheimer Society of B.C.'s Dementia-Friendly Communities initiative, and how the program can benefit the community through stigma reduction, education and community planning. The delegation will also describe criteria for becoming a dementia-friendly community. Ultimately, the delegation aims to receive Mayor and Council's support for the District to work towards becoming dementia-friendly.

Contact person (if different than above):

Daytime telephone number:

604-742-4941

Email address:

mprzydatek@alzheimerbc.org

Will you be providing supporting documentation?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If yes:

☒ Handout

☐ DVD

☒ PowerPoint presentation

Note: All supporting documentation must be provided 12 days prior to your appearance date. This form and any background material provided will be published in the public agenda.

Presentation requirements:

☒ Laptop

☐ Tripod for posterboard

☐ Multimedia projector

☐ Flipchart

☒ Overhead projector

Arrangements can be made, upon request, for you to familiarize yourself with the Council Chamber equipment on or before your presentation date.

## Delegation to Council Request Form

### Rules for Delegations:

1. Delegations must submit a Delegation to Council Request Form to the Municipal Clerk. Submission of a request does not constitute approval nor guarantee a date. The request must first be reviewed by the Clerk.
2. The Clerk will review the request and, if approved, arrange a mutually agreeable date with you. You will receive a signed and approved copy of your request form as confirmation.
3. A maximum of two delegations will be permitted at any Regular Meeting of Council.
4. Delegations must represent an organized group, society, institution, corporation, etc. Individuals may not appear as delegations.
5. Delegations are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to direction from the Mayor, Council, or Chief Administrative Officer.
6. The Mayor or Chief Administrative Officer may reject a delegation request if it regards an offensive subject, has already been substantially presented to council in one form or another, deals with a pending matter following the close of a public hearing, or is, or has been, dealt with in a public participation process.
7. Supporting submissions for the delegation should be provided to the Clerk by noon 12 days preceding the scheduled appearance.
8. Delegations will be allowed a maximum of five minutes to make their presentation.
9. Any questions to delegations by members of Council will seek only to clarify a material aspect of a delegate's presentation.
10. Persons invited to speak at the Council meeting may not speak disrespectfully of any other person or use any rude or offensive language or make a statement or allegation which impugns the character of any person.

### Helpful Suggestions:

- have a purpose
- get right to your point and make it
- be concise
- be prepared
- state your request, if any
- do not expect an immediate response to a request
- multiple-person presentations are still five minutes maximum
- be courteous, polite, and respectful
- it is a presentation, not a debate
- the Council Clerk may ask for any relevant notes (if not handed out or published in the agenda) to assist with the accuracy of our minutes

I understand and agree to these rules for delegations

Maria Przydatek

December 7 2015

Name of Delegate or Representative of Group

Date

Signature

### For Office Use Only

#### Approved by:

Municipal Clerk

Deputy Municipal Clerk

☒

Appearance date:

Feb 09, 2016

Receipt emailed on:

JAN. 4. 2016

#### Rejected by:

Mayor

CAO

Applicant informed on:

Applicant informed by:

The personal information collected on this form is done so pursuant to the Community Charter and/or the Local Government Act and in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. The personal information collected herein will be used only for the purpose of processing this application or request and for no other purpose unless its release is authorized by its owner, the information is part of a record series commonly available to the public, or is compelled by a Court or an agent duly authorized under another Act. Further information may be obtained by speaking with The District of North Vancouver's Manager of Administrative Services at 604-990-2207 or at 355 W Queens Road, North Vancouver.





# DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES LOCAL GOVERNMENT TOOLKIT

JANUARY 2016

**Alzheimer** *Society*  
BRITISH COLUMBIA

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This *Toolkit* aims to support local governments in British Columbia in their efforts to make their communities more supportive of people with dementia. Dementia is an overall term for a set of symptoms that are caused by disorders affecting the brain. Dementia is not a specific disease. Many diseases can cause dementia, the most common being Alzheimer's disease and Vascular dementia (due to strokes). Symptoms may include memory loss and difficulties with thinking and problem-solving. Dementia is not a normal part of aging and is progressive, which means the symptoms will gradually get worse.

Many people with dementia live well in the community for quite a long time. However, dementia may make participating in activities and staying involved more difficult. People with dementia and caregivers tell the Society that stigma, as well as social and physical barriers, can make it more difficult to get around and to feel supported in their communities. However, with a little bit of information, a lot of compassion and your help, there is an opportunity to create positive change.

Becoming a dementia-friendly community is a journey as opposed to a destination. The Alzheimer Society of B.C. has established a process so that villages, towns, districts and cities can be officially recognized as *working towards becoming dementia friendly* over a number of years. The criteria below ensure that communities are able to work towards a common vision based on what is important and meaningful to people affected by dementia. Here are the steps to becoming dementia friendly:

## 1. Partner in providing dementia-friendly education

- 1.1. Hold a Dementia Friends workshop for the Mayor and the local government council.
- 1.2. Co-host a Dementia Friends workshop for the general public.

## 2. Create a dementia-friendly working group (DF working group)

- 2.1. Identify key stakeholders and community members to join a DF working group responsible for advising on your local government's Dementia-Friendly Action Plan. People living with dementia should be included as a core part of this DF working group consulting on dementia-friendly work in the community.

## 3. Develop a Dementia-Friendly Action Plan

- 3.1. Work with the Alzheimer Society of B.C., local government staff and the DF working group to create a Dementia-Friendly Action Plan tailored to your community. See page 30 for a worksheet.
- 3.2. Focus your Dementia-Friendly Action Plan on key areas identified locally by people living with dementia, caregivers and the DF working group.
- 3.3. Develop a strategy to communicate to the general public the dementia-friendly work being done in your community. This should be created in partnership with city staff and the DF working group. Examples include local radio and print media, open houses, social media updates or a dementia-friendly communities section on the municipal website.

## 4. Implement your Dementia-Friendly Action Plan

- 4.1. Continue to regularly meet with the DF working group, including people living with dementia, to work on implementing the Dementia-Friendly Action Plan.
- 4.2. Continue to work with the Society to review progress on your action plan and ongoing ideas for dementia-friendliness.

## 5. Stay accountable

- 5.1. Engage people with dementia on an ongoing basis in guiding and consulting on dementia-friendly goals and actions.
- 5.2. Provide a maximum one-page brief or organize a short update meeting every six months with the Alzheimer Society of B.C.
- 5.3. Complete an annual self-assessment (worksheet provided by the Society) on your community's progress.

The Dementia-Friendly Communities initiative assists communities in developing tailored approaches to supporting people living with dementia in their community. The initiative supports local governments through:

1. **Resources:** Education sessions, information on dementia and communicating appropriately, as well as consulting on the local Dementia-Friendly Action Plan.
2. **Networks:** Support to identify key stakeholders in the community and ideas for collaborating with them to best provide support and resources for community members living with dementia. For example, all Health Authorities in B.C. have at least one built environment specialist. They may be able to support this work, through providing health evidence and engaging with the community, other Health Authority departments and participating in the DF working group.
3. **Program integration:** Integration with an age-friendly grant or project. The Dementia-Friendly Communities initiative adds nuance and emphasizes the needs of people with dementia; it can also be integrated with a local government's Healthy Community partnership with a Health Authority. A Dementia-Friendly Action Plan could be part of a healthy community strategy and included in existing work.

This resource includes background information on dementia and dementia-friendly communities, steps and practical tools to begin a Dementia-Friendly Action Plan and a dementia-friendly

working group, as well as examples of how local governments can create communities that are inclusive, supportive and accessible for people with dementia.

This document discusses the considerations that should be made in both the social and built environments, in the areas of people, policy and practice. The practical suggestions and checklists in this document are compiled from evidence-based best practices and new approaches that show promise in communities around the world. It also includes examples from local contexts and responds to frequently-asked questions to inform dementia-friendly work in a way that acknowledges and builds upon the unique characteristics of various communities.

Any information, examples or resources included in this *Toolkit* are intended to complement community strengths, and adapt to local contexts and needs. They should not be confused with provincial certification or monitoring standards.

### What is local government?

According to the Union of B.C. Municipalities, local government is a term for either municipalities or regional districts. Municipalities are cities, districts, towns or villages which have power to govern themselves. There are 162 municipalities in B.C. providing service to approximately 87 per cent of the provincial population.<sup>1</sup> A regional district provides local services to rural areas outside of municipalities. Regional districts work with municipalities to jointly fund services for an entire region and to provide sub-regional service.<sup>2</sup> In this document the term local government will be used to describe both municipalities and regional districts.

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The background of the entire page is a light gray map pattern showing a network of streets and building footprints. A white horizontal band is positioned across the upper portion of the page, containing the section title.

# SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

## The Alzheimer Society of B.C.'s Dementia-Friendly Communities initiative

Through its Dementia-Friendly Communities initiative, the Alzheimer Society of B.C. provides tools, information and education to communities across the province that plan to become more inclusive, respectful and understanding of all persons living with dementia. This initiative assists communities in increasing accessibility for people with dementia and their caregivers. As the population of our province ages, a dementia-friendly initiative will support individuals to age and maintain a better quality of life in their own homes and communities.

### Vision of the Dementia-Friendly Communities initiative

Our vision is to create communities throughout B.C. that are welcoming to people with dementia. A dementia-friendly community focuses on stigma reduction and the inclusion of people with dementia. All people are educated about dementia and know that a person with dementia may sometimes experience the world differently. In a dementia-friendly community, people living with dementia feel supported by their community members.

## Goals of the Dementia-Friendly Communities initiative

The Alzheimer Society of B.C.'s Dementia-Friendly Communities initiative exists to support municipalities, the professional sector, community groups and the general public to become dementia-friendly through tools, education and partnership. This initiative aims to:

1. Support people with dementia, as well as their families and friends, to have the highest quality of life possible in their own homes through reducing the stigma associated with dementia.
2. Reduce organizational, social and physical barriers that prevent people with dementia from fully engaging in community activities.
3. Support people with dementia to live safely and comfortably in their communities for as long as possible.
4. Build understanding and knowledge about dementia among professionals.
5. Improve general health and well-being for people living with dementia and their caregivers.



Figure 1. The Dementia-Friendly Communities initiative has three key components: people, policy and practice



## How does the Dementia-Friendly Communities initiative complement age-friendly community work?

### What is an age-friendly community?

The age-friendly community concept was developed from the World Health Organization's [active aging framework](#). Age-friendly communities support and enable people to age actively and promote the inclusion of older adults in all areas of community life.<sup>3</sup> They aim to optimize opportunities for health, participation and security to enhance quality of life and respect lifestyle choices. Furthermore, they aim to anticipate and respond to aging-related needs. Age-friendly communities have come to address the capacities and needs of people of all ages, not only those who are "elderly."<sup>4</sup>

### Limitations of the age-friendly community concept

- Age-friendly community planning does not necessarily incorporate people with dementia into the process of implementing change. Actively incorporating dementia into current policy and projects will help empower people with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias and may also address the needs of others living with cognitive impairments.
- In Canada, the age-friendly community movement is growing, especially in Quebec and Manitoba; however, gaps continue to exist in addressing dementia in public spaces. Age-friendly communities make no specific reference to meeting the needs of people with dementia.

### Why are dementia-friendly communities an asset to age-friendly communities?

- Dementia-friendly communities complement age-friendly initiatives by adding nuance and depth with respect to the needs of people with dementia. Working specifically with dementia in mind is more instructive and inclusive of both physical and cognitive impairments. For

example, while adding more outdoor seating is age-friendly, if the seating design is ambiguous and does not clearly indicate its function, it is not a dementia-friendly change.

- Dementia-friendly planning acknowledges caregivers and the concepts of interdependence and reliance.
- It also recognizes people with impairments who may feel excluded from the active aging framework guiding age-friendly work.
- It is important that older age not become equated with dementia, which is a reason for encouraging the use of two different initiatives. Dementia not a part of normal aging and can affect younger people in their early sixties, fifties or even forties.

### Age-friendly resources

1. [Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide \(2007\)](#)
2. [Canada's Aging Population: The municipal role in Canada's demographic shift \(2013\)](#)
3. [Age-friendly Communities in Canada: Implementation Guide](#)
4. [Age-friendly Rural and Remote Communities: A Guide](#)
5. [Age-friendly BC](#)

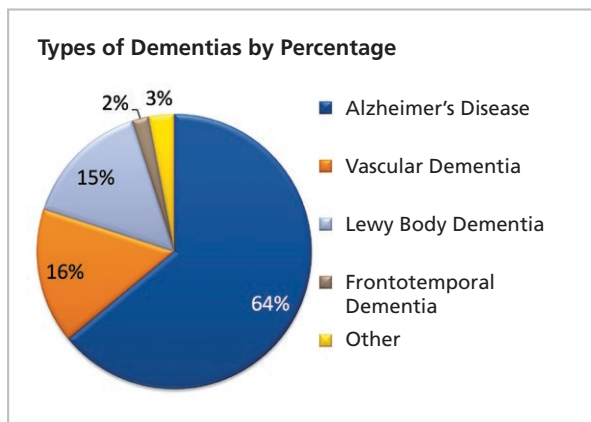
## What is dementia?<sup>5</sup>

Dementia is a word that refers to the condition resulting from many neurological diseases. It is an “umbrella term” used to speak about these diseases, which cause different physical changes to the brain. These diseases include:

- Alzheimer’s disease
- Vascular dementia
- Lewy body dementia
- Frontotemporal dementia, including Pick’s disease
- Other dementias, including Creutzfeld-Jakob disease

People with dementia may experience the following symptoms:

- Memory loss affecting day-to-day function
- Difficulty performing familiar tasks
- Disorientation of time and place
- Decreased judgment
- Changes in mood and behavior



- Problems with language
- Loss of initiative
- Change in personality
- Misplacing things
- Problems with abstract thinking

It is important to note that some of these symptoms can also be caused by conditions that may be treatable. These conditions may include depression, thyroid disease, drug interactions or infections. Community members should consult with their family physicians if they have any concerns.

### Normal Aging

- Not being able to remember small details of a conversation or event that took place a year ago.
- Not being able to remember the name of an acquaintance.
- Forgetting things and events occasionally.
- Having occasional difficulty finding words.

### Dementia

- Not being able to recall details of recent events or conversations.
- Not recognizing or knowing the names of family members.
- Forgetting things or events more frequently.
- Using frequent pauses and substitutions when finding words.

Table 1. Dementia is not part of normal aging

*Note: this is not a diagnostic tool.*

## Signs of dementia and communication strategies

It is not always possible to tell immediately that a person has dementia. Everyone will experience dementia differently – no two people will have the same strengths and abilities at the same points along the disease trajectory, nor will they experience all of the same challenges.

However, here are some signs that a person you know in your community may be experiencing symptoms of dementia and some strategies for responding in a supportive way:



Signs	Communication strategies
<p><b>Problems with memory.</b></p> <p>As the disease progresses a person with dementia may forget things more often and not remember them later, especially more recent experiences. A person living with dementia may forget an appointment, or the sequence or details of an event. They may forget to pay for their dog license or may have lost a tax bill.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not argue. If a person with dementia does not remember a discussion you had previously, for example, it is because he or she is no longer able to properly store that memory due to changes in their brain.</li> <li>• When at all possible try to adjust to a person with dementia's reality because they may no longer be able to adjust to yours. You can do this by responding to feelings not necessarily the stories the person shares.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Difficulty with familiar tasks.</b></p> <p>A person with dementia may have trouble with tasks that have been familiar to them all their lives. This is related to challenges in abstract or sequential thinking. Completing paperwork or following directions may now be challenging for them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try demonstrating rather than providing directions verbally.</li> <li>• Don't rush – this may mean booking a longer appointment or meeting.</li> <li>• Take things one step at a time.</li> </ul>

Signs	Communication strategies
<p><b>Inability to follow a conversation or find the right words.</b></p> <p>Everyone has trouble finding the right word sometimes, but a person with dementia may frequently forget simple words or substitute a less appropriate word for the one they really want. This can make their sentences or accounts of events difficult to understand.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak slowly and provide one message at a time. This will give the person the time they need to digest the information.</li> <li>• When possible use close-ended or yes or no questions. When this is not possible use questions that have parameters: for example, “Tell me about going to the bank yesterday afternoon” rather than “What did you do yesterday?”</li> <li>• Ask the person’s permission to help them find the right word.</li> <li>• Repeat the question a different way or try again later.</li> <li>• Bring the person to a quieter place.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disorientation of time or place.</b></p> <p>It’s normal to briefly forget the day of the week or your destination. But a person with dementia can become lost somewhere familiar, not knowing how they got there or how to get home. New spaces like an unfamiliar newly-developed city square or building may make a person with dementia anxious.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you have concerns about someone’s ability to get home safely, ask them how they are planning to travel. With a person with dementia’s permission, it might be necessary to walk him or her to the bus stop or wait with them until a taxi arrives.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Poor judgment.</b></p> <p>A person living with dementia may experience decreased judgment. This could mean a variety of things: the person may dress inappropriately for the weather, may experience less social inhibition or their behaviour may put them at risk of becoming a victim of a crime or personal injury.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make suggestions tactfully and respectfully. For example, instead of saying, “Why are you dressed in a t-shirt in November? You must be freezing!” it may be helpful to say something like “It has gotten cool all of a sudden, would you like to borrow a sweater?”</li> </ul>

Signs	Communication strategies
<p><b>Problems with abstract thinking.</b></p> <p>A person with dementia may have challenges with tasks that require abstract thinking. This may make answering open-ended questions difficult and it may be challenging to make sense of symbols or images. This may include being unable to make sense of bathroom signs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Because dementia affects a person's ability to use abstract thinking, try to use straightforward language. Avoid metaphors or turns-of-phrase like "a penny for your thoughts" or "wake up on the wrong side of the bed."</li> <li>Stay positive, but avoid jokes or sarcasm, as these require advanced abstract thinking skills that can be difficult for some people with dementia.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Challenges in mood or behaviour.</b></p> <p>Everyone experiences changes in mood. But a person with dementia can sometimes become suspicious, withdrawn or even more outgoing than before. Over time a person with dementia may become more apathetic, fearful or even paranoid. For example, they may lose interest in activities they previously enjoyed: a person who loved going for walks is no longer interested in doing so.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adapt to the changes the person is experiencing. Like all of us, people with dementia will have "good days" and "bad days." If a person with dementia is having a bad day it may be helpful to reschedule a meeting or appointment.</li> <li>Acknowledging the feelings of a person with dementia, as expressed by their mood, can be helpful even if you feel their stories may not be accurate. Addressing their feelings may help address challenging behaviour.</li> </ul>

### Other tips for communication

- Remember to make eye contact. If you are making notes, take a break and make sure to look at the person.
- A person's capability to understand body language is often maintained for a long time along the dementia journey. Take note of your body language — watch your gestures, facial expressions and posture and keep positive.
- It may be necessary to remind someone to put on their glasses or turn on their hearing aid, but do not assume that every person with dementia has a visual or hearing impairment.
- Avoid using baby talk, or "elder-speak" (for example, "sweetie" or "dear"). Always speak to the person with dignity and respect.
- Never speak about the person to others, as if they are not there.

### Key communication strategies

1. Get the person's attention.
2. Make eye contact.
3. Bring the person to a quieter place.
4. Speak slowly and clearly.
5. Share one message at a time.
6. Use close-ended questions – yes or no answers.
7. Allow time for response.
8. Respond to feelings, not stories.
9. Connect, don't correct.
10. Repeat or try again later.

Figure 2. Key communication strategies

## What is a dementia-friendly community?

**A dementia-friendly community is a community that focuses on the inclusion of people with dementia and on stigma reduction.** Its community members are educated about dementia and recognize that people with dementia may sometimes experience the world differently. Community members foster understanding about dementia and encourage people with dementia to participate in their communities to the fullest extent possible.

In a dementia-friendly community, people living with dementia feel supported by their fellow community members even when they face potential challenges at post offices, retail outlets, using transportation or enjoying hobbies out in the community.

The term “community” can mean a location like a neighborhood or city, but can also include groups of people with shared interests or features, such as professional groups, faith groups or local businesses.

Dementia-friendly communities are defined by both their social characteristics (p.13) and physical characteristics (p.15). These attributes can help support people with dementia by reducing anxiety, stigma or frustration.

“A dementia-friendly community will help create inviting and supportive places where people like me, who are living with dementia in the community, can feel comfortable and safe walking, shopping and just getting around.”

– Jim Mann, B.C. Leadership Group member

## Why are dementia-friendly communities important in B.C.?

- Dementia is a challenging condition and affects more than 70,000 people in B.C.
  - approximately 1.6 per cent of the total

population. This number is expected to grow as the population of the province ages. Dementia affects not only individuals, but families and communities too.<sup>6</sup>

- Approximately 60 per cent of people living with dementia live by themselves or with a caregiver in our communities.<sup>7</sup>
- Many people with dementia live well in the community for quite a long time and all people with dementia should feel valued, included and respected.
- When people must leave familiar settings or adjust their routines due to the changes brought on by the dementia, they may lose a sense of personhood, belonging and independence.
- There is potential to reduce injury and isolation. An example is wandering: everyone benefits when community members can recognize and respond appropriately when a person with dementia is wandering or experiencing disorientation.

## What makes a difference to people living with dementia?

1. The built environment (streetscapes, signage)
2. Local facilities (shops, post office, library)
3. Support services (day programs, home care, community-based health care)
4. Social networks (family, community members)
5. Local groups (support groups for people with dementia)

Figure 3. What makes a difference



## Dementia-friendly communities: Local government considerations

People want to age in place and stay at home for as long as possible and many experts argue this is best, especially for a person with dementia. When people must leave familiar settings due to the changes brought on by the illness, and the resulting stigma and embarrassment about behaviour changes, they experience a tremendous amount of stress. There can be a loss of independence, sense of belonging and identity associated if people with dementia have to leave their home. People want to live a good quality of life in their neighbourhoods when they age – and still be valued community members, be acknowledged and feel a sense of belonging.

Many of the noticeable difficulties people with dementia face in their social and physical environments can be decreased when barriers causing disability are reduced or removed. When communities are dementia-friendly, a person is able to navigate the familiar and legible landscape around them, or more likely to ask for assistance from a compassionate passerby.

### Social environment

A dementia-friendly community member recognizes that:

- A person with dementia is more than their diagnosis.
- Dementia can affect a person's cognition, behaviour, emotions and physical capabilities.
- Everyone has a role to play in seeing people with dementia as a part of their community and supporting their safety, independence, value and inclusion.
- There are particular signs of wandering, which should be taken seriously and to which everyone should respond.

What a dementia-friendly environment may look like:

- Dementia education is available to help community members understand how to provide appropriate assistance and to feel more confident in knowing how to respond to a person with dementia.
- Community organizations include people with dementia in their regular programming and through specifically designed activities.
- City staff – whether librarians or community centre staff, or parking and bylaw officers, police or firefighters – are dementia-educated, able to recognize and communicate effectively with a person with dementia.
- Others in the community, such as shopkeepers, bank tellers and bus drivers, may receive dementia education specific to their job.

### The social fabric of dementia-friendly communities: Dementia Friends

As a way to build understanding, compassion and respect, the Alzheimer Society of B.C. encourages municipalities to host Dementia Friends workshops. These “dementia 101” workshops provide an orientation to dementia, as well as communication strategies for people to learn more about the disease and the people living with it. This is a way to educate people about dementia, to reduce stigma, raise awareness and provide practical suggestions about supporting people with dementia in the community. The workshops complement the Dementia-Friendly Communities initiative. We suggest organizing workshops when a community is first exploring becoming dementia friendly, as it provides a good base from which to build dementia-friendliness.

Contact us to organize a Dementia Friends workshop in your community at [dementiafriendlybc@alzheimerbc.org](mailto:dementiafriendlybc@alzheimerbc.org)!



Figure 4. Quotes from Dementia Friends workshop participants (2015)



## Built environment

The built environment<sup>8</sup> “refers to the human-made or modified physical surroundings in which people live, work, and play”<sup>9</sup> – characteristics such as buildings, parks, schools, transportation systems and other infrastructure that is used on a daily basis. A built environment that is welcoming to people with dementia includes:

- Clear and legible signage placed at eye level. Optimally, signage should be simple and explicit with large, darker, unambiguous graphics on a light background.
- Well-kept streets. Signs of street decay, such as trash and vandalism, can decrease walking, especially among older adults.
- Flat, wide and unobstructed sidewalks with smooth, plain, non-slip, non-reflective paving.
- Clearly marked accessible washrooms in public spaces.
- Landmarks, distinctive structures, open spaces and places of activity and rest.
- Easy-to-use street furniture in styles familiar to people. Preliminary studies indicate that style is less important than clarity of function and use. Ambiguity of design is challenging for persons living with dementia.
- A walkable neighbourhood, in which services are within 250-500 metres of residences.

The built environment, through its design and use, can have a positive or negative impact on independence and safety. It may affect a person with dementia’s ability to access, comprehend and utilize their surroundings. Any built form that negatively affects orientation, confuses or increases the risk of falls puts community members with dementia in challenging situations. Many people with dementia have a tendency to limit going out, but a dementia-friendly community should make it easier and more appealing to go out and socialize. Here are some reasons the built environment is so important for people with dementia and their caregivers:

- A person with dementia’s abilities change as the disease progresses. While this change will limit their interaction with the outdoor environment, this interaction, according to research, provides some sense of independence and self-respect at a time when they are experiencing the loss and new challenges due to their cognitive impairment.
- The majority of people with dementia, particularly in the mild to moderate stages, continue to go out alone daily, but may be

### Example 1. Dementia friendly in practice

As part of the Society’s work with the City of Vancouver, staff in various departments participate in a Dementia Friends workshop. Staff who are educated can better provide assistance to people with cognitive impairment. City Hall can also assess the built environment, such as signage, to ensure that it is legible, visible and easily understandable for people with dementia.

City staff participating in educational workshops at the City of Vancouver:

1. Social planning
2. Police
3. Parks and recreation
4. Frontline staff (eg. reception)
5. Interdepartmental senior leadership working on collaborative health and social projects



limited in where they go or how they get around to doing things closer to home. For example, some older adults with dementia limit their outside activities to relatively undemanding situations, such as going to the corner shop, posting a letter or going for a short walk.

- People with dementia generally enjoy going out but anxiety, disorientation or confusion can occur in complex, crowded or heavily trafficked places or when startled by sudden loud noises.
- Despite cognitive changes, people with dementia may visualize planned routes. They tend to use familiar landmarks and other visual cues they regularly encounter, rather than maps and written directions as wayfinding techniques.



In considering the design and construction of streets, public spaces and buildings, municipalities could incorporate a dementia-friendly lens to address the points above, and also reduce the likelihood of injuries to both people with dementia and caregivers who may assist them in the community. A dementia-friendly lens employs the following key principles that are fundamental to dementia-friendly design:<sup>10,11</sup>

1. **Inclusion** – In this instance, inclusion is characterized by interest in the lived experience of dementia, so that the feelings and experiences of people with dementia are legitimized and respected. For neighbourhoods to be considered sustainable and inclusive, they should allow for equality of access and opportunity

regardless of ability or age. One of the barriers to accessibility and belonging is stigma. A well-designed built environment can enhance independence, which in turn has an impact on quality of life factors such as confidence, health and self-respect.

2. **Accessibility** – The principle of accessibility addresses how urban public spaces enable people with dementia to reach, enter, use and walk around the places they visit. Due to the progression of dementia and ongoing changes to the urban landscape, accessibility is characterized as a constantly-changing experience between the person and public spaces.
3. **Distinctiveness** – Distinctiveness helps people understand where they are and helps them identify which way they should go. Connected with the principle of familiarity, distinct places have easily legible features that give clues to help people understand where they are and what is expected of them in that space. Distinctive places also retain local character through built form, design features, colours and materials that give the streets and buildings their own identity. Employing familiar designs is one example, as is maintaining long-established landmarks that are positioned at decision points for ease of navigation.
4. **Safety** – Only when people perceive the outdoors to be safe can they enjoy being out in the community. The possible benefit of having safe outdoor environments is an ameliorated quality of life for citizens, especially if the environment is inclusive of a range of physical and cognitive abilities.
5. **Familiarity** – Familiarity addresses the psychological by referring to the recognizable nature of urban public spaces and the extent to which older persons can easily understand and navigate their environments. Familiarity helps with wayfinding.



6. **Comfort** – Comfort refers to the ability to visit places without mental or physical discomfort. Comfort is often associated with calm, welcoming, informal and pedestrian-friendly spaces.

Employing these principles in your planning can positively affect the quality of life for people with dementia. Using these principles may also improve your community's accessibility and inclusivity for other groups as well.



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## SECTION 2: IMPLEMENTATION



## Starting the process: First steps to becoming a dementia-friendly community

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. is here to help. With expert information, resources and support, we can support a community's steps towards becoming dementia friendly. One of the first steps a community should take is to connect with the Society to receive expert consultation on your projects and to make sure you receive the appropriate recognition for your work. The Society provides materials, including toolkits, sector-specific materials and other resources to unite your community with our provincial initiative.

If you let us know what your community is doing, we will also be better able to advocate for dementia-friendly work throughout the province, as we work to increase support from various organizations and stakeholders.

People with dementia in your community are key to this initiative. We encourage you to consult with them before committing to dementia-friendly actions. By making sure that the actions outlined in your Dementia-Friendly Action Plan are informed by the lived experience of people with dementia in your community, your actions are more likely to be effective and targeted at the areas that are most meaningful. Furthermore, involve municipal staff from different departments – such as Engineering, Library, Parks, Planning and Police – in order to inform the Dementia-Friendly Action Plan and build ownership and commitment in support of implementation.

By making a formal commitment to becoming a dementia-friendly community your municipality sends a strong message: that dementia is important and that you are working toward inclusivity.



## Steps to becoming a dementia-friendly community

### Step 1. Partner in providing dementia-friendly education.

- Hold a Dementia Friends workshop for the Mayor and the local government council.
- Co-host a Dementia Friends workshop for the general public.
- Appoint a dementia-friendly communities point-person to be the Alzheimer Society of B.C.'s contact.

### Step 2. Set up a dementia-friendly working group (DF working group).

- Identify key stakeholders and community members to join a working group responsible for advising on your local government's Dementia-Friendly Action Plan. People with dementia should be included as a core part of this working group and should consult on dementia-friendly work in the community.

### Step 3. Develop a Dementia-Friendly Action Plan.

- Work with the Alzheimer Society of B.C., local government staff and the DF working group to create a Dementia-Friendly Action Plan tailored to your community. See a Dementia-Friendly Action Plan worksheet ([pg. 30](#)).
- Focus the Dementia-Friendly Action Plan on key areas identified locally by people with dementia, caregivers and the DF working group.
- Develop a strategy to communicate the dementia-friendly work being taken in the community with the general public. This should be created in partnership with city staff and the DF working group.

### Step 4. Implement your Dementia-Friendly Action Plan.

- Present the Dementia-Friendly Action Plan to the Society for endorsement.
- If endorsed, share with City Council, and request an endorsement ([pg. 28](#)) or a resolution to work towards becoming dementia-friendly.
- Continue to meet with the DF working group regularly and include people with dementia to work on the Dementia-Friendly Action Plan.
- Continue to work with the Society to review Dementia-Friendly Action Plan progress and ongoing ideas for dementia-friendliness.

### Step 5. Stay accountable.

- Engage people with dementia on an ongoing basis in guiding and consulting on dementia-friendly goals and actions.
- Provide a maximum one-page brief or organize a short update meeting every six months with the Alzheimer Society of B.C.
- Complete an annual self-assessment (worksheet provided by the Society) on your community's progress.

Figure 5. How to work towards becoming dementia friendly

## Actions local government can take<sup>12</sup>

Dementia-friendly communities will look different depending on the size and resources of each municipality. The key for effective policy change is to inform the thinking underlying policy so it is inclusive of people with dementia and their caregivers.

### Education examples

- Educate local government councils with Dementia Friends educational workshops.
- Host an educational public event in partnership with the Alzheimer Society of B.C.
- Host continuous Alzheimer Society of B.C. dementia education sessions in accessible community spaces such as libraries.

“Dementia affects individuals, as well as family, friends and neighbours. Consideration and respect for the person with dementia means that everyone is supported. Through dementia-friendly communities we create a ripple effect – small actions result in big changes and create better municipalities for us all.”

- Dr. Penny Ballem, Vancouver City Manager

### Bylaw examples

- Create separate bike and pedestrian pathways.
- Use traffic calming methods such as narrow traffic lanes and residential traffic diversion to reduce traffic speed and volume. Encourage active transportation as well as public transit with legibly labelled and accessibly located bus stops.
- Improve signage in your area. Use large graphics and symbols with clear colour contrasts such as dark lettering on a light background. Part of improving signage is placing signs along a path with easy-to-follow instructions in visible locations that assist someone getting from one location to another.

- Encourage mixed land use through zoning, in order to promote multi-purpose spaces near residential areas, ideally within a five to ten minute walk.
- Provide support for home maintenance and update building codes to provide for accessible housing. For example, the City of New Westminster, as part of its Age- and Ability-Friendly Community Initiative, implemented an Adaptable Housing Policy and Bylaw. More specifically, the City, through its zoning bylaw, requires 40 per cent of all new single-storey, multi-family units to be adaptable.

## Example 2. Dementia friendly in practice

Priority areas as expressed by people with dementia:<sup>13</sup>

1. Community awareness and understanding of living with dementia.
2. Inclusion in social activities and engagement opportunities, such as volunteering.
3. Support to continue living at home for as long as possible supported by access to appropriate health care services.
4. Accessible outdoor environment with clear signage, appropriate lighting and distinctive use of colours.
5. Affordable, accessible transportation and housing options in the community support to remain employed.





- Enforce the creation of social squares in new developments to facilitate social inclusion.
- Accept companion dogs in shops, grocery stores and other local places.

### Example 3. Dementia friendly in practice

A dementia-friendly racquet club could be inclusive of members who have difficulty remembering the rules of the games by organizing a buddy program to support players with dementia.



### Policy examples

Arrange for all frontline staff to participate in a Dementia Friends workshop.

- Educate planning, engineering and other key city staff through a Dementia Friends workshop and with access to appropriate dementia-related resources.
- Build public toilets accessible for persons with mobility impairments; for example, designate washrooms as family or mixed gender washrooms.
- Increase the duration of crossing walk lights and have visual and audio cues.
- Create parking drop-off zones in front of physician clinics and other medical facilities so caregivers are able to take a person with dementia safely inside, before parking the car.

### Programs examples

- In partnership with your local business bureau, organize a Dementia Friends workshop series specifically for businesses in your community.
- Work with recreation centres to develop exercise programming that is accessible for people with dementia, both younger onset and for those age 65 and older.
- Maximize opportunities to access and engage with the natural environment through projects like edible landscapes in greenways and community gardens. Research supports a strong relationship between exposure to nature and the reduction of stress, chronic disease, depression, anxiety, improved concentration and cognitive functioning.

### Example 4. Dementia friendly in practice

When planning community events, city staff and organizing committees could support a volunteer program for people with dementia to promote social engagement, while at the same time raising awareness in the community.







who display aggressive behaviour or who live alone. The connectivity of a smaller community may also be perceived as negative for those who would like to keep their diagnosis private or limited to a small circle of supporters.

### Why should rural communities consider becoming dementia friendly?

1. Dementia-friendly communities can provide community-based supports where fewer formal supports exist.
2. The Society is mobile and is able to travel to rural communities to provide dementia education.
3. The Society is keen to work with communities in a way that suits their needs.
4. This is an opportunity to provide education and awareness in communities that may be historically underserved with medical services and information.
5. This is a way to support citizens to stay in their communities for longer periods of time before moving away.



"I think the support system can be much stronger in a small community. I think in a small community, we all take responsibility for our seniors, where in a city you hear stories all the time of someone wandering away and, you know, they could be wandering on the street and nobody would really approach them. I think the likelihood of that happening in a small community is very much smaller."

"If we see a senior in this community who appears to be in difficulty at all, everybody just kind of rallies around. And even if we see a senior who's in the grocery store carrying grocery bags, it's totally unheard of that people would walk by and not say, 'Can I give you a ride home?'"

"There's just much more of an ownership of responsibility for people who have challenges, whether they are seniors or children, or people who are facing developmental challenges."

– Community member, participant in the research "Dementia in Rural Northwestern Ontario: Understanding the Context and Issues" (2011)

## ► URBAN CASE STUDY: CITY OF NEW WESTMINSTER

From our conversations with representatives of the City of New Westminster, here are some of their thoughts on becoming dementia friendly.

### Why does New Westminster want to be dementia friendly?

The City of New Westminster has undertaken significant work in the area of Age- and Ability-Friendly Communities, including an extensive consultation process with older adults and seniors. This work is informing the City's Official Community Plan. It has also been used to facilitate the development of a number of initiatives in support of an Age- and Ability-Friendly Community, including an Adaptable Housing Policy and Bylaw, an Age-Friendly Business Initiative, a Century House Inclusion Project, an annual Connecting Seniors to Services Fair, a Seniors Engagement Toolkit, a Seniors Services Directory and a "Wheelability Assessment Project."

New Westminster, similar to other municipalities in Metro Vancouver, is experiencing an aging population. Between 2011 and 2036, the number

of people over the age of 50 will increase by 88 per cent and the number of people over the age of 65 will increase by 130 per cent. By comparison, the population as a whole will increase by 44 per cent. As people age, they report more health and activity limitations. As evidence, 57 per cent of people over the age of 65 report such limitations. Dementia also becomes more prevalent as people age. In New Westminster, it is estimated that 940 people currently have dementia, with this number projected to almost double to 1,830 by 2034. Additionally, research shows that about half of the people with dementia live in the community.

Given that about 500 people with dementia are currently living in the community, the question of planning for their needs becomes important – ensuring that the built environment is accessible and that people with dementia have opportunities for involvement and social interaction. This is critical for their independence and quality of life. The City has a key role to play, as it informs the built environment and is responsible for civic facilities and infrastructure such as sidewalks. It also offers a range of programs and services





## ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF B.C.

including fire, library, police and recreation. On a daily basis, this is the level of government that most impacts all citizens' lives.

### What are your goals?

The City of New Westminster is working towards becoming more dementia friendly. In October 2013, City Council endorsed three Senior Advisory Committee recommendations in support of becoming a dementia-friendly community. The City also successfully applied for a 2015 Age-Friendly Community Planning and Project Grant and will use this funding to develop a Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan and three Action Guides. The plan will be based on a comprehensive literature review and consultation process, including with people living with dementia, their caregivers, family members and health-care professionals. The plan will also inform the development of the City's Official Community Plan, which is a policy document which sets the vision, goals and objectives for the future of the city. It also provides an overall framework for decisions on a range of areas including planning, land use, building and development, housing, neighbourhood character, social policy and transportation.

On January 26, 2015, New Westminster became British Columbia's first dementia-friendly City

Council, with councillors participating in a Dementia Friends workshop conducted by the Alzheimer Society of B.C.

### What partners are you considering working with?

The City of New Westminster will be working with the Alzheimer Society of B.C. and Fraser Health. The City and the Alzheimer Society are currently collaborating to raise public awareness about dementia. More specifically, the City and the Society recently participated in a dementia-friendly community panel at the New Westminster Seniors Festival, which attracted over 500 seniors. The City will also explore developing a more formal relationship with Fraser Health related to the development of the Action Plan and three Action Guides.

### What are your next steps?

The next steps are to retain the services of a consultant and to establish a working group which will work towards the development of the Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan and three Action Guides. This work will be completed by December 2015. At this time, the working group will shift from planning to implementation.



## ► RURAL CASE STUDY: VILLAGE OF VALEMOUNT

From our conversations with representatives of the Village of Valemount, here are some of their thoughts on becoming dementia friendly.

### Why does Valemount want to be dementia friendly?

Keeping people in their home where everything is familiar and comforting is important. We all live in communities, and most importantly our communities are made up of people – a village's citizens. We all need a sense of belonging and we all need to keep engaged in life. Valemount has a large number of seniors, some living with dementia. As a community, we need to know how to communicate and how to make their lives safe, productive and comfortable.

### What are your goals?

Our goals are to make our community knowledgeable about dementia. Local businesses of all kinds need to be aware of what to look for and how to react when someone living with dementia comes in. We need to be vigilant and caring about all our citizens. We also need to be aware of the stresses that caregivers are facing and know how to assist them. The bottom line is to make Valemount a warm and welcoming place where our friends living with dementia feel confident to walk out their front doors and venture into town without worry.

**"We cannot let our friends stay locked in their houses feeling scared and nervous about going out into the village."**

**– Hollie Blanchette, Councillor,  
Village of Valemount**

### What partners are you considering working with?

1. Chamber of Commerce
2. Local government
3. Schools
4. Bank
5. Library
6. Medical clinic
7. Seniors housing
8. Robson Valley Support Society
9. Hotels and restaurants
10. Non-profit societies
11. Home based businesses
12. First responders
13. All our citizens

### What are your next steps?

Our next step is to work on our Dementia-Friendly Action Plan.



## How to develop your Dementia-Friendly Action Plan



New Westminster's Mayor Cote and Maria Howard, CEO of the Alzheimer Society of B.C., at the Council's Dementia Friends workshop. New Westminster was the first Council in B.C. to receive the Dementia Friends workshop.

People with dementia deserve the same service and have the same human rights as all other community members, including engagement in their community. Becoming dementia friendly means you can communicate more respectfully with all citizens, while meeting the communication and service needs of people living with dementia. To achieve this, your Action Plan does not necessarily need to make large promises: small, meaningful changes can make a significant difference. The Action Plan can be a high-level overview document to help organize your priorities and commence the discussion about dementia-friendly communities. It should be tailored to the needs of your particular context. As your community moves forward in its work, your actions may change or develop. You are not bound by your Action Plan, only encouraged to accomplish what is determined as feasible by your community.

This initiative is not intended to burden resources, but rather to be incorporated into existing systems, policies and programs, and to nuance action within your community through consideration of the lived experience of people with dementia. During this process, it is also important to consider your community's capacity to achieve these actions and plan accordingly.

To increase your chance of success in implementing your specific actions:

- Nominate a dementia-friendly communities point-person in the community to be the Society's contact person.
- Convene a working group that includes people with dementia.
- Advertise interest in speaking to people with dementia in the community.
  - ♦ Consider word-of-mouth, hosting a community forum on dementia or connecting with seniors' groups.
- Engage people with dementia beyond the stakeholder group to test and assess the actions of the plan.

We encourage you to submit your Action Plan to the Alzheimer Society of B.C. for endorsement and feedback. Local governments are also encouraged to pass a resolution to become dementia friendly and endorse their Dementia-Friendly Action Plan with the recommendation that:

Council endorses the proposed activities and agrees to provide overall financial management related to the subject plan conducted as part of the Alzheimer Society of B.C.'s Dementia-Friendly Communities initiative.

Refer to the upcoming Resources section for a suggested Dementia-Friendly Action Plan worksheet.



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## SECTION 3: RESOURCES

## Dementia-Friendly Action Plan worksheet

Please list at least two actions for each category. If you require suggestions or recommendations, feel free to connect with the Alzheimer Society of B.C. Upon completion, send the Action Plan to [dementiafriendlybc@alzheimerbc.org](mailto:dementiafriendlybc@alzheimerbc.org).

NAME	Name of the working group, including all stakeholders, number of participants and location
DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES POINT-PERSON	Name, and contact information
WORKING GROUP MEMBERS	Name, and organization they are a part of OR if they are living with dementia OR a caregiver
VISION	<p>What is the working group's vision for a dementia-friendly municipality/ community?</p> <p><i>For example, "Our objectives aim to engage with the local community to provide education about dementia that will enable community members to make changes and take positive steps towards becoming a dementia-friendly community" or</i></p> <p><i>"Work with local stakeholders to make the community a friendly place for people with dementia and their caregivers to live, work and play."</i></p>
ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTORS	Explain who has been involved in the development of the plan if they are not on the working group.



ENGAGING PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA				
Actions (2x)	Responsibility	Timeline	Resources required	Possible outcomes
<i>Actions to take to engage people with dementia in the process of becoming dementia friendly</i>	<i>Who will be responsible for this action? E.g. organization name or individual name</i>	<i>When will this action be completed? E.g. Fall 2015</i>	<i>What will be required to achieve this action? E.g. volunteers, materials</i>	<i>Identify the level of impact. E.g. policy change, program development, increased awareness, reduced mishaps, etc.</i>
<i>For example, "Organize a group of people with dementia from the community to identify challenges and needs they experience in the community."</i>				
<i>"Identify which services are being underutilized or which require more expansion."</i>				
SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT				
Actions (2x)	Responsibility	Timeline	Resources required	Possible outcomes
<i>Possible actions to positively influence the social environment</i>	<i>Who will be responsible for this action?</i>	<i>When will this action be completed?</i>	<i>What will be required to achieve this action?</i>	<i>Identify the level of impact.</i>
<i>For example, "Challenge stigma, myths, misconceptions through education."</i>				
<i>"Work with local stakeholders to increase opportunities for people with dementia to remain engaged in their chosen activities and in community activities."</i>				

BUILT ENVIRONMENT				
Actions (2x)	Responsibility	Timeline	Resources required	Possible outcomes
Possible actions to positively influence the built environment	Who will be responsible for this action?	When will this action be completed?	What will be required to achieve this action?	Identify the level of impact.
For example, "Design accessible ground level public toilets in popular public locations that allow caregivers to provide assistance."				
"Build more street furniture, whose design clearly identifies its purpose."				
POLICY				
Actions (2x)	Responsibility	Timeline	Resources required	Possible outcomes
Possible actions to positively influence municipal policy	Who will be responsible for this action?	When will this action be completed?	What will be required to achieve this action?	Identify the level of impact.
For example, "Reviewing existing policy, practice, programming."				
"Remove barriers to change by addressing current municipal policy and bylaws."				
OPTIONAL				
Action(s)	Responsibility	Timeline	Resources required	Possible outcomes
Other dementia-friendly actions that you would like to include	Who will be responsible for this action?	When will this action be completed?	What will be required to achieve this action?	Identify the level of impact.
For example, "Identify key partners, services, and businesses within our local context."				
This plan has been submitted for endorsement from the Alzheimer Society of B.C., which has:				
<input type="checkbox"/> Endorsed the "Working to become dementia friendly" status.		<input type="checkbox"/> Provided feedback for revisions to be made to the plan.		
Signature of Alzheimer Society of B.C. representative:				
Date:				

## Dementia-friendly outdoor environment checklist<sup>15</sup>



The following is a summary of key findings based on a research project of the Wellbeing in Sustainable Environment Research Unit of the Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development. Use the following checklist to assess the existing dementia-friendly features in your community and to conceptualize possible next steps for your community. Offering preliminary guidance for all levels of urban design, this checklist may be useful for planners, designers and architects.

### Characteristics

#### Sidewalks

- ☐ Walking trails and sidewalks are wide and flat.
- ☐ Crosswalks and public toilets are at ground level.
- ☐ Unavoidable level changes such as at crosswalks, have a slope with a maximum gradient of one in 20.
- ☐ Crosswalks are placed at adequate intervals to provide safe access.
- ☐ Some sidewalks are tree-lined or pedestrianized to offer protection from heavy traffic.
- ☐ Street clutter (signs, advertising billboards and pillars) is minimized.
- ☐ Trails and sidewalks are wide, well maintained and clean.
- ☐ Bicycle lanes are separate from sidewalks.
- ☐ Crosswalks have audible cues at a pitch and timing suitable for older people.
- ☐ Paving is flat, smooth, non-slip, plain and non-reflective in clear colours and in textural contrast to building walls.
- ☐ Trees close to sidewalks have narrow leaves that do not stick to pavement when wet.
- ☐ Street lighting is adequate for people with visual impairments.

#### Why these are important

Since dementia affects memory and people with dementia may forget things more often, retracing one's steps may become more difficult. Dementia can also affect a person's vision and depth perception, increasing the likelihood of falls.

## Signs

- ☐ Signs are minimal, giving simple, essential information at decision points, such as intersections or junctions.
- ☐ Signs are easily visible, in clear locations that are not cluttered with other signs.
- ☐ Signs locating important places and buildings are hung horizontally on the wall or are attached perpendicularly to the wall.
- ☐ Signs have large graphics with realistic symbols in clear colour contrast to the background, preferably dark lettering on a light background.
- ☐ Signs have non-glare lighting and non-reflective coverings.
- ☐ Notices such as this one may be placed at eye-level near entrances to public washrooms: "Members of another gender might be in this washroom assisting someone."

## Why these are important

Dementia may cause changes in a person's abstract thinking ability, vision and memory.



Example 1. Clear signage compared to confusing signage

## Design

- ☐ The architectural features used in design are familiar or easily understood.
- ☐ Obvious cues are positioned where sightlines end, especially at decision points, such as junctions and bends, to make directional decisions easier.
- ☐ Entrances to buildings or public areas are clearly visible and obvious.
- ☐ Architectural features are in a variety of styles, colours and materials.
- ☐ Gates and/or doors have no more than two kilograms of pressure to open and have lever handles.
- ☐ Acoustic barriers, such as planting and fencing, reduce background noise.

### Why these are important

With dementia there are related challenges in abstract or sequential thinking. This means that people with dementia cannot always interpret the cues that signal the use of buildings.

## Street furniture

- ☐ Street furniture is designed in a familiar way, obviously indicating its use as a resting place.
- ☐ Telephone booths are enclosed.
- ☐ Bus shelters are enclosed and have seating.
- ☐ Seating is sturdy with arm and back rests and made from materials that do not conduct heat or cold.

### Why these are important

Ambiguity of design is challenging for people with dementia because of changes in their abstract thinking. Changes in judgment may also make determining the function of certain objects difficult.



Example 2.  
Ambiguous design  
compared to  
familiar design

## Overall

- ☐ Street types are hierarchically designed and varied in their size and use: main streets, side streets, alleyways and trails. Quiet side roads provide alternative routes away from crowds and traffic.
- ☐ Blocks are small and laid out on an irregular grid based on an adapted perimeter block pattern.
- ☐ Streets are short and fairly narrow.
- ☐ Streets are well connected and gently winding with open ended bends to enable visual continuity.
- ☐ Forked and T-junctions are more common than crossroads.
- ☐ Buildings and spaces are long established with changes being gradual and on a small scale. The function of a building or place is obvious, and building forms are varied.
- ☐ The variety of landmarks includes historic and civic buildings (such as war memorials or churches), distinctive structures (such as a water tower and public art) and welcoming open spaces and places of activity (such as urban squares, parks or playgrounds).
- ☐ Land uses are mixed.
- ☐ Services and facilities are within five to ten minutes walking distance of housing.
- ☐ The outdoor environment is welcoming and unthreatening, with quiet alternative routes away from crowds and traffic.
- ☐ Urban areas have small, well-defined open spaces with toilets, seating, shelter and lighting.
- ☐ Spaces and buildings are oriented to avoid creating areas of dark shadow or bright glare.

## Why these are important

As the disease progresses, a person with dementia can become lost somewhere familiar, not knowing how they got there or how to get home. New spaces like an unfamiliar courthouse or office may make a person living with dementia anxious.

## FAQ

### How do we set up a dementia-friendly working group?

1. Speak with Mayor and council, encouraging them to take the Dementia Friends workshop.
2. Gauge the interest of staff at city hall and host a Dementia Friends workshop open to the public.
3. Work with people who are passionate about the cause and interested in sustaining awareness and change in the community. Aim for about five dedicated members and, most importantly, include people living with dementia and their caregivers. These people are your experts. They are living with the effects of the disease and have firsthand experience of what will benefit them in the community. Learn about their experiences of living in the community: Where they feel supported? Where can improvements be made?
4. Work with other people and organizations already working with people with dementia in the community.
5. Speak with community members in your area, people who have a good network and are part of the community's key decision-makers.
6. Organize an accessible location at which to meet regularly to keep Action Plan items on track.

### What are some guiding questions our community might begin to address?

- What types of organizations should be involved in dementia-friendly community planning?
- Have you already been involved in this type of planning?

- What changes would make your community more dementia friendly?
- What would have an impact on people with dementia and their caregivers in your area?
- Does your community already have some dementia-friendly elements?

### What are some key things we can do to be successful?

- Recruit, retain and include community partners and individuals who share in your dementia-friendly community vision.
- Establish a volunteer working group of people living with dementia to consult on your community projects through walking interviews, one-on-one consultations, group consultations, and engagement workshops, to include the *direct* voice of people with dementia.
- Promote dementia-friendly communities in local and provincial media.
- Work with the Society to identify tools to allow volunteers and other stakeholders to promote and sustain local momentum for dementia-friendly communities.

### Tips from the UK<sup>16</sup>

- Ensure people living with dementia are consulted and involved in planning or redesign of the physical space.
- Engage with the private as well as non-profit sector: the private sector is just as important for people living with dementia as it is for the rest of the community.
- Remember that even relatively minor changes can transform a problematic activity into one which is accessible and inclusive of people with dementia.



### What kind of messages will help us to engage local community members or other stakeholders?

- Present a unique selling point, for example, “You will be a trailblazer in your community.”
- This is an opportunity for stakeholders to improve the services they provide to seniors, which may as a consequence enhance their reputation for good customer care or, in the case of a municipality, as a great place to live.
- Participating can be better for business. All businesses want to keep up their customer base and be known for good customer care, especially in communities that have many seniors who would feel more confident and safer shopping and being out and about where there is an increased level of understanding.
- On a personal level, the Dementia Friends workshop and the Dementia-Friendly Communities initiative can provide people with increased sensitivity and understanding when speaking with older relatives.

### How can we organize a Dementia Friends workshop in our community?

- E-mail the Alzheimer Society of B.C. at [dementiafriendlybc@alzheimerbc.org](mailto:dementiafriendlybc@alzheimerbc.org) to request a workshop. Please provide the following information:
  - ♦ Name of person/organization requesting the workshop
  - ♦ Location (city) and expected venue
  - ♦ Three optional dates and times for the workshop
  - ♦ Target audience
  - ♦ Size of the potential audience

We will connect you with a volunteer or staff person to organize and deliver the workshop.

### How does the B.C. Dementia-Friendly Communities initiative work together with Dementia Friends Canada?



Alzheimer Societies across Canada are working with the Public Health Agency of Canada on the national Dementia Friends Canada awareness and public engagement initiative. The aim is to create a more aware and informed Canadian population to dispel myths and reduce stigma about dementia. Visit [www.dementiafriends.ca](http://www.dementiafriends.ca) to watch an informative video, register as a Dementia Friend, and then commit to an action you can take as a Dementia Friend.

The provincial Dementia-Friendly Communities initiative is paired with the national program; however, there are some differences between the national awareness campaign and the provincial social change initiative. Dementia Friends Canada focuses on individual actions, while our work focuses on community engagement and change; through our Dementia Friends educational workshops we add nuance and depth to the important information being shared in the Dementia Friends Canada campaign. We encourage people to check out the national website, but also to engage with the provincial Society to start or become a part of the meaningful dementia-friendly work happening in their community.

People can become Dementia Friends through the Society or through the Federal program. The Federal program is brief; thus, the provincial workshops offer the opportunity to further develop the awareness gained in the online program.



**Thank you for joining the Alzheimer Society of B.C.  
in creating dementia-friendly communities.**

**The Society is here to help people living  
with dementia, caregivers and communities.**

**We commend you on your commitment and passion  
for helping people living with dementia  
age safely and happily in their communities for longer.**

**Alzheimer***Society*  
BRITISH COLUMBIA

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND VIDEOS

### Alzheimer Society of B.C.

[Jim's Story](#)

[Dementia-friendly communities webpages](#) (2015)

[Making your workplace dementia-friendly: Information for financial professionals](#)

[Making your workplace dementia-friendly: Information for housing professionals](#)

[Making your workplace dementia-friendly: Information for legal professionals](#)

[UBCM dementia-friendly communities presentation](#) (September 2014)

### Provincial

Provincial Dementia Strategy for British Columbia, Ministry of Health (forthcoming 2016)

[The dementia policy lens toolkit](#), Penny MacCourt, PhD (March 2009)

### National

[Building strong communities](#), University of Waterloo

[Community dementia action plan: designing a way forward](#), BrainXchange (June 2015)

[Crime prevention through environmental design](#), RCMP (1998)

[Dementia Friends Canada](#), Alzheimer Society of Canada and Government of Canada (June 2015)

[Dementia-friendly outdoor environments, age friendly communities: tools for design and dementia](#), BrainXchange

[Intersection between the built and social environments and older adults' mobility: an evidence review](#), National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health (November 2012)

## International

A tool kit for building dementia-friendly communities, Wisconsin Healthy Brain Initiative (USA) (May 2015)

Aging in place bibliography, American Planning Association (USA)

Comments from the Sikh community: dementia-friendly Gurudwaras, Alzheimer's Society UK (July 2014)

Creating dementia-friendly communities: business toolkit, Alzheimer's Australia (2014)

Dementia resource suite for schools, Alzheimer's Society UK (2014)

Dementia-friendly churches, Livability (UK)

Dementia-friendly communities: Derek's story, Alzheimer's Society UK (September 2013)

Dementia-friendly town of Crawley, Alzheimer's Society UK (July 2014)

Dementia-friendly Yorkshire: first steps on the journey, Joseph Rowntree Foundation (January 2014)

Dementia-friendly, ACT on Alzheimer's (USA)

Developing dementia-friendly communities (physical features checklist), Housing Learning & Improvement Network (UK) (June 2012)

Developing dementia-friendly communities: learning and guidance for local authorities, Innovations in Dementia and The Ageing Well program (May 2012)

Developing supportive design for people with dementia, The King's Fund (UK)

Guide to practical examples of dementia-friendly initiatives, Alzheimer Society of Ireland (September 2013)

Small changes help make a dementia-friendly community, Alzheimer's Society UK (March 2014)

SPACE: Environments that are dementia-friendly, Royal College of Nursing UK (October 2012)

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- 4 T. Buffel and C. Phillipson, "Aging in urban environments: Developing 'age-friendly' cities," *Critical Social Policy* 32, no. 4 (2012)
- 5 Unless otherwise indicated, information source:
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  - ♦ Alzheimer Society of B.C. ["10 warning signs,"](#) (2015)
  - ♦ Alzheimer Society of B.C. ["Normal aging vs dementia,"](#) (2014)
- 6 Alzheimer Society of Canada, *Rising tide: The impact of dementia on Canadian society*, (2010)
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- 8 Unless otherwise indicated, information source:
  - Elizabeth Burton, Lynne Mitchell, and Shibu Raman, "Dementia-friendly cities: Designing intelligible neighbourhoods for life," *Journal of Urban Design* 9, (1): 89-101 (2004)
  - Elizabeth Burton, Lynne Mitchell, and Shibu Raman, ["Neighbourhoods for life: Designing dementia-friendly outdoor environments,"](#) (2004)
- 9 Provincial Health Services Authority, "Healthy built environment," (2015)
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- 11 Elizabeth Burton, Lynne Mitchell, and Shibu Raman, *Inclusive urban design: Streets for life* (Burlington, MA: Architectural Press, 2006)
- 12 Kathryn Cunningham, "Dementia-friendly communities: What consumers really want," *Australian Journal of Dementia Care* (2014)
- 13 Alzheimer's Australia, *Creating dementia-friendly communities: Community toolkit*, (2014)
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Elaine Wiersma and Alison Denton, *Dementia in rural northwestern Ontario: Understanding the context and issues*, (2011)  
  
For additional resources visit [Rural Dementia Action website](#), University of Saskatchewan
- 15 Elizabeth Burton, Lynne Mitchell, and Shibu Raman, "Neighbourhoods for life: Designing dementia-friendly outdoor environments," (2004)
- 16 Local Government Association and Innovations in Dementia, *Developing dementia-friendly communities: Learning and guidance for local authorities*, (2012)

## Acknowledgements

The Alzheimer Society of B.C.'s *Dementia-Friendly Communities Local Government Toolkit* was informed and created using a variety of international resources on dementia-friendly communities and age-friendly communities. We thank all the organizations who share their information for their generous spirit and dedication to promoting dementia friendliness.

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Design: Flora Gordon

Version: 2016-10-13

# Alzheimer Society

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## REPORTS



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AGENDA INFORMATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regular Meeting	Date: <u>April 11, 2016</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Committee of the Whole	Date: _____

_____ Dept. Manager	_____ GM/ Director	_____ CAO
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## The District of North Vancouver REPORT TO COUNCIL

March 30, 2016

File:

**AUTHOR:** Councillor Lisa Muri

**SUBJECT:** Request for Council Contingency Fund Grant - Blue Cabin Remediation

### RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the expenditure of up to \$10,000 from the Council Contingency Fund is granted to the Blue Cabin Committee to assist with the remediation costs of the Blue Cabin.

### REASON FOR REPORT:

To obtain Council's approval to use funds from the Council Contingency Fund to assist the Blue Cabin Committee to pay for the remediation costs to the Blue Cabin before it is moved to a permanent location.

### SUMMARY:

The Blue Cabin is the name given to a small wood house that is best known as the former home of artists Al Neil and Carole Itter. Built in the 1930's and moored on a barge in Vancouver's Coal Harbour, it was subsequently towed to North Vancouver and relocated on piles on the Dollarton foreshore, adjacent to Cates Park. The site was cleared for remediation and redevelopment in June 2015 and the cabin was moved to an industrial site in North Vancouver where it is now on skids and secured. At this time, the Blue Cabin Committee is requesting funds in the amount of \$10,000 from the District of North Vancouver which will be used to pay for initial remediation work to the cabin.

### BACKGROUND:

The cabin is recognized for its architectural, historical, cultural and social significance by many in the community. The current vision of repurposing the Blue Cabin as a heritage facility on the water will continue to add to the cultural and historical legacy of Vancouver.

The Blue Cabin was recovered from the Dollarton foreshore in 2015 and relocated to Canexus Chemicals where secured storage is being provided for one year with an option to renew for an additional year. The first year will come to an end in June 2015 and the cabin will require remediation before it can be moved to a permanent home. The Blue Cabin Committee is currently raising funds for remediation of the cabin and a feasibility study to determine the final use and location of the building.

**Financial Impacts:**

The current balance of the Council Contingency Fund is \$87,850.

**Conclusion:**

The Blue Cabin has a strong local, regional, cultural, historic and artistic value as it is the last remaining foreshore dwelling from Burrard Inlet. This makes it a valuable opportunity for the District to contribute towards the preservation of the cultural and historical legacy of Vancouver.

**Options:**

1. Council can support this project by providing a funding grant for the remediation of the Blue Cabin; or,
2. Council can show support by considering other ways to contribute towards the Blue Cabin project.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa Muri  
Councillor

**Attachments:**

- grant - Blue Cabin Project
- Blue Cabin Structural Review
- Harold Kalman – Heritage Conservation and Architectural History

REVIEWED WITH:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Community Dev. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Clerk's Office _____	External Agencies:
<input type="checkbox"/> Development Services _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Communications _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Library Board _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Finance _____	<input type="checkbox"/> NS Health _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering Operations _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Fire Services _____	<input type="checkbox"/> RCMP _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Parks _____	<input type="checkbox"/> ITS _____	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>NVRC</b> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Environment _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Solicitor _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum & Arch. _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Facilities _____	<input type="checkbox"/> GIS _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate _____	





## Blue Cabin Project

### **Request for \$10,000 from the District of North Vancouver towards the early remediation of the Blue Cabin**

#### Introduction

Our proposal to repurpose the Blue Cabin as a sustainable and vital floating artist residency began from the singular ambition of saving the last squatters' cabin on the Burrard Inlet. From hiring the moving company with the expertise to safely move and transport the structure securing the financial support to make it happen, and finding a temporary and secure home to do repairs, we have consistently sought appropriate partners and collaboratively worked towards realizing our incremental goals. Our request for support from CoV Cultural Services is for the next, very important phase of work: remediation and planning.

As introduced in the attached "Conservation and Re-use Plan for the Blue Cabin" by heritage specialist and architectural historian Hal Kalman, the Blue Cabin was built in Vancouver during the early 1930's. The cabin was moved by barge onto the north foreshore of the Burrard Inlet near Cates Park in 1932 by the Norwegian man who built it. He used the cabin as a temporary residence while he worked at the neighboring McKenzie Barge & Derrick Company. Rented by jazz musician and artist Al Neil in the 1960's, the cabin was used by him and his wife artist Carole Itter until June of 2015.

In the late 1960's and 70's, Port Metro and the municipality eradicated all of the alternative shelters that occupied the foreshores of the inlet. The Blue Cabin was spared from this purge because its ownership was assumed to be related to the operations of McKenzie Barge.

In 2013 the land was purchased from the ship builder by Polygon for a condo project and in October of 2014, Al and Carole received their first eviction notice. Recognizing the connection of this cabin to the region's cultural and social history, a partnership was formed through Carole Itter and Al Neil to protect the cabin. This group now includes Glenn Alteen Program Director of the grunt gallery, Marko Simcic of Other Sights for Artists' Projects, and Esther Rausenberg of Creative Cultural Collaborations and Executive Director of East side Culture Crawl. In addition we are working with Project Manager Michael Jackson. Barbara Cole is currently working on feasibility work around the cabin.

Our vision for the cabin is to return it to a barge to be used as a studio space alongside a small house to act as a floating compound for a unique and vital multi-disciplinary artist-in-residence program. The project aims at engaging the Heritage Communities in Vancouver looking at the maritime history of Vancouver including the history of squatting, waterways as conduits for trade and opportunities to address BC's Resource Based economies within a Global Context. The interface between contemporary art and heritage is what makes this project unique. The residency will be off the grid with solar panels, composting toilets, rain water catchment, and a small container garden.

### Remediation and Planning

With the cabin's safe move into storage to a secured lot at Canexus Corporation in North Vancouver and having received recommendations regarding the cabin's repairs, we feel ready to begin the second phase of our work to ensure the cabin's remediation and planning for its future. The Heritage Plan by Kalman and Todd and Clint Low's Structural

### Support

Until now most of the expenses have been covered by volunteer labour including the cabin committee, our project manager Michael Jackson, Hal Kalman and Andrew Todd Heritage and Remediation Plan and currently Clint Low of Bush Bohlman and Partners have recently done a structural assessment of the cabin. In addition Canexus has donated the space to store the cabin, Supreme Movers moved it for minimal costs and Polygon paid \$12,000 for the move and built a road so we could get the cabin out. The Hamber Foundation has also given us a \$1000 towards the remediation costs. grunt gallery has donated \$10,000 from its recent Community Amenity Contributions Award from the City of Vancouver towards the feasibility and remediation of the cabin.

In addition through the donation of time and funding towards the cabin we have also received letters of support from the North Shore Heritage Preservation Society and the North Shore Waterfront Liaison committee and emails from a range of people on the North Shore who support our project. Nancy Kirkpatrick of the North Vancouver Museum and Archives have also supported us through a city report and a video on the Blue Cabin by Krista Lomax through support from Port Metro.

**\$10,000 from the District of North Vancouver** would go a long way to completing this initial remediation work and preparing for the grant application in the spring through the Cultural Spaces Program at Heritage Canada. So much has been accomplished already without government support we feel that this support from the District would be strategic and vital to the project going forward

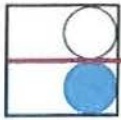
Glenn Alteen  
Program Director grunt gallery  
On Behalf of the Blue Cabin Committee

## BUDGET

### REVENUES

Donations to date	\$ 800
Hamber Foundation	\$ 1,000
CAC through grunt gallery	\$10,000
District of North Vancouver Cultural Department	\$10,000
Total	\$21,800
Initial Feasibility Study (Barbara Cole, Cole Projects) 3 months x \$2000 per month	\$ 6,000
Remediation costs including cleaning, structural stabilization pest prevention, Cobra Rods,temporary covered worksite, managing contractor bids, and other immediate needs as recommended structural and pest inspections	\$15,800
Total	\$21,800



**March 7, 2016****Project No.: 6677****Michael Jackson PMP, LEED AP**

Manus Consulting Inc.

563 Dollarton Highway North,

North Vancouver BC V7G 1N3

**RE: BLUE CABIN STRUCTURAL REVIEW**

Sir,

**Background:**

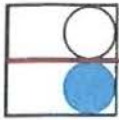
A group of artists, professionals, and suppliers led by the 'Blue Cabin Committee' consisting Glenn Alteen of Grunt Gallery in Vancouver and artists Esther Rausenberg and Barbara Cole have started an initiative to preserve the 'Blue Cabin' which is the last of the many squatters cabins that once populated the North Vancouver waterfront east of the Second Narrows bridge. The Blue Cabin was once home to artists Al Niel and Carole Itter and has recently been moved from its foreshore site to a storage yard at Canexus Chemicals in North Vancouver. The Blue Cabin Committee through Michael Jackson of Manus Consulting Inc contacted Clint Low, P.Eng, StructEng of Bush Bohlman and Partners LLP to assist with a structural assessment of the cabin condition. The following report documents our site observations and recommendations.

**Condition Review:**

A visit was made to the Canexus Chemical yard in North Vancouver to see the cabin on March 1, 2016. The purpose of the visit was to conduct a visual inspection to determine the current condition of the Blue Cabin and then provide comments and recommendations regarding potential preservation and re-use. Michael Jackson of Manus Consulting Inc also attended the site visit.

**Site Observations:**

- The cabin measures about 12' x 24' and is single storey wood frame construction dating from around 1930.
- The cabin is currently supported on four timber cribs. Remnants of the old timber dock structure that the cabin once sat on remains between the cabin floor joist structure and the timber cribbing.
- The old timber dock structure does not form part of the cabin floor structure. The dock timber material is severely rotted.
- The cabin floor consists of 2x12 joists spaced at about 27" centres spanning across the width of the cabin. The joists are sheathed with shiplap floor boards. Generally the joists are sound except at the exterior ends where they have been exposed to moisture and have rotted. The rot appears to be confined to about 12"-18" at the ends of the joists. The rot includes the perimeter box joist. There may be some rot in the shiplap flooring above the ends of the joists.
- The exterior walls are wood stud with horizontal board exterior cladding. The bottom two rows of boards that cap the ends of the floor joists have rotted. It is not known if the rot extends up into the stud walls, however, the cladding boards above the floor level appear relatively sound. The exterior paint finish and cladding boards are quite weathered.



- The roof framing consists of 2x12 rafters at 27" centres that span across the cabin width. The top surface of the rafters have been curved to provide a slope for roof drainage. The joists vary in depth from 11.25" at the centre to about 7" at the support walls. The roof is sheathed with shiplap boards. There is a new SBS roof surface that was applied when the cabin was moved. The roof rafters cantilever past the exterior walls to create 2' eaves. The ends of the roof joists appear sound but access was not available for a close up examination.
- An interior bearing wall and roof joist was removed at some time during the life of the cabin. The roof boards span 54" at that location.
- The interior walls are finished with a variety of wood materials from bead board sheeting to vertical boards. The structural contribution of the finishes to the strength of the cabin is limited.
- The cabin appears to be out of plumb (door frame not square) and the floor is uneven. Some of this may be due to the move.
- Exterior wood detailing around doors and windows is weathered. Paint finishes have failed.

#### Engineering Analysis:

Floor: A review of the 2x12 floor framing spanning the full width of the cabin confirms that floor is capable of supporting a live load of 50 psf (2.4 kPa) which is suitable for residential or office type occupancy. If the floor joists were supported more frequently by sleeper beams (intermediate supports) the floor load capacity could be increased substantially.

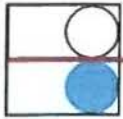
Roof: The roof joists are capable of supporting a snow load of about 45 psf (2.2 kPa) which is appropriate for the City of Vancouver or West Vancouver. The published snow loads for North Vancouver are higher than 45 psf, however, consideration for using a lower roof snow load may be appropriate if the cabin was on a barge or at the foreshore at sea level elevation.

#### Remedial Work:

As a minimum, we expect the following remedial work will be required to address existing rotted wood and to make the cabin meet a reasonable level of structural safety. Further remedial work may be required depending on intended use and location.

1. New 2x12 floor joists sistered to the existing floor joists, remove any rotted ends of the existing joists.
2. Remove existing box joists and install new box joists all around.
3. Replace damaged and rotted exterior cladding boards.
4. Replace damaged and severely weathered wood trim features.
5. Remove and refurbish (or replace) existing door and windows.
6. Replace missing roof joist (or reinstate a wall).
7. Remove interior finishes, ½" plywood sheath the interior walls (insulate walls and install vapour barrier at the same time). Reinstall existing removed finishes or replace with replica materials as suitable.
8. Remove existing flooring materials down to the original shiplap board flooring. Install ½" plywood sheathing and new floor finishes.
9. Prep and repaint exterior.
10. Review roof membrane and eave details, add gutter as appropriate.



**Recommended Next Steps:**

1. Remove the old timber dock structure from below the cabin. This material is severely rotted and is in the way of a proper assessment and repair of the cabin floor. The cabin needs to be re-supported on a pair of longitudinal beams positioned inboard of the joist ends about 18" complete with timber cribbing supports. This will allow installation of new joists and removal of rotted ends of joists.
2. Remove at least the bottom 3 rows of exterior cladding boards so that the condition of the exterior wall and edge of the floor can be inspected. This will be required to install new floor joists and replace rotted cladding boards.

Once the above has been completed, another inspection is recommended in order to confirm the scope of rot remedial work that will be required.

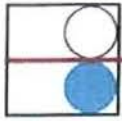
This report was prepared for the sole use of the Blue Cabin Committee in determining next steps and potential costs for restoration of the cabin. Note that the full scope of restoration work will depend on conditions of existing framing, some of which were not exposed at the time of the site visit, and intended use and final location of the restored cabin. Please contact the undersigned if there are any questions or if you require further assistance at this time.

Yours Truly,



**Clint Low, P. Eng., Struct. Eng.**  
**Senior Partner**

cc: **Glenn Alteen**  
Grunt Gallery  
350 E 2nd Ave #116  
Vancouver, BC V5T 4R8



PHOTOS:



Photo 1 – 'Blue Cabin' - side elevation showing timber cribbing supports



Photo 2 – End elevation - box joist rotted; old dock lumber remains below cabin



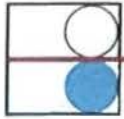


Photo 3 – Weathered siding and wood detailing trim



Photo 4 – Rotted siding and box joist

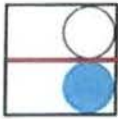


Photo 5 – Box joist and ends of floor joists rotted; floor boards generally sound



Photo 6 – Wall and roof joist has been removed



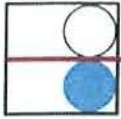


Photo 7 – Variety of flooring materials

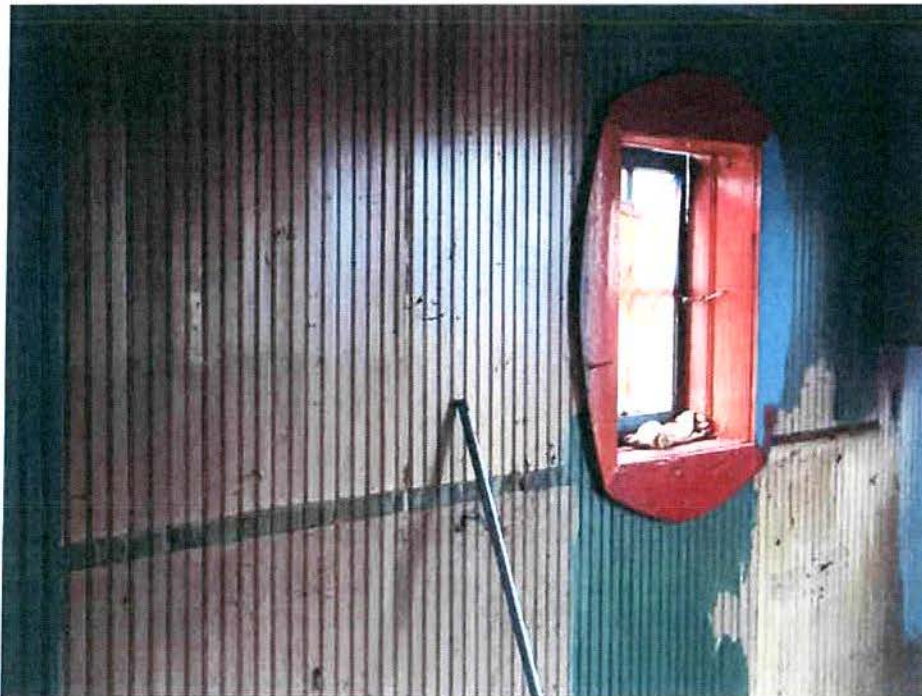
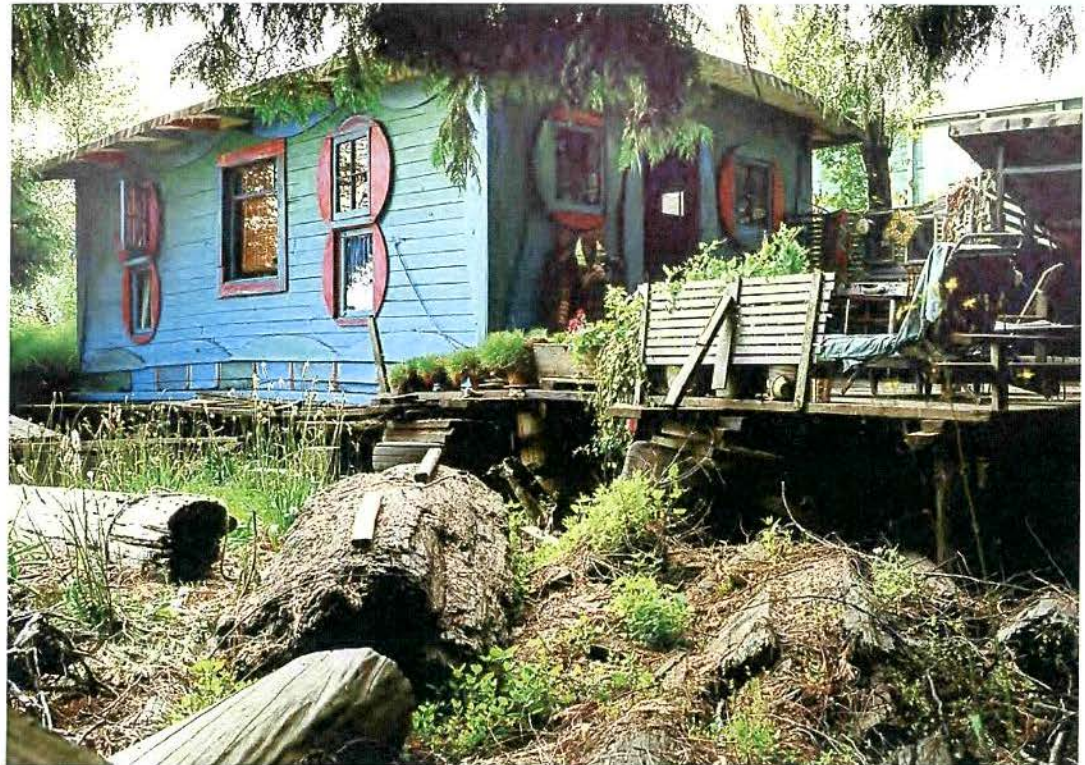


Photo 8 – Interior wall finish - bead board and vertical boards

HAROLD  
KALMAN

*Heritage Conservation and  
Architectural History*



## A Plan for the Conservation and Re-use of the Blue Cabin

Submitted to the Blue Cabin Committee

Harold Kalman with Andrew Todd Conservators Ltd.

February 2016



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## 1. Background

The 'Blue Cabin' is the name given to a small wood house that is best known as the former home of artists Al Neil and Carole Itter. Built in the 1930s and moored on a barge in Vancouver's Coal Harbour, it was subsequently towed to North Vancouver and relocated on piles on the Dollarton foreshore, adjacent to today's Cates Park. When the site was cleared for remediation and redevelopment in June 2015, Neil and Itter were evicted and the cabin was moved again. It has been placed on skids and secured on an industrial site in North Vancouver.



*The Blue Cabin, Dollarton, North Vancouver, 1996. (Carole Itter)*

Many people have recognized that the cabin has heritage significance. It was the former long-time residence of prominent artists and a noteworthy example of a rapidly disappearing building-type, the foreshore squat. The leading voices for its conservation and re-use have been those of Glenn Alteen, director of the grunt gallery in Vancouver; and artists Esther Rausenberg, Creative Cultural Collaborations; and Barbara Cole, Other Sights. This 'Blue Cabin Committee', led by Alteen, has worked tirelessly to attract interest and support. The committee has retained heritage planner Harold Kalman to prepare the present plan for the long-term conservation and re-use of the Blue Cabin. Kalman is referred to in the report as the author and the consultant. Conservator Andrew Todd is responsible for material on the conservation of materials and structure (Section 4.3 and the original reports in the appendix). Kalman and Todd both offered their services *pro bono*, following the lead of many other artists, professionals, and suppliers who have agreed to donate goods and services in order to retain the Blue Cabin.



Kalman and Todd began their work in June 2015. A preliminary report was submitted in September. Several meetings and discussions with the client group followed, leading to improvements and revisions. This final report has been prepared after further comments.

The authors and the Blue Cabin Committee have worked together closely throughout the preparation of the conservation and re-use plan. The content and the recommendations reflect this collaboration. Nevertheless the views expressed in the report are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the client, other than the recommended solution, which was selected by the Blue Cabin Committee and is supported by the authors.



*The Blue Cabin, interior view. (©Stan Douglas, reproduced with the permission of the artist)*

## 2. History and significance of the Blue Cabin

### 2.1 History and context

#### The Dollarton and Cates Park Foreshore

Dollarton, Cates Park, and a large part of the Burrard Inlet shore have been inhabited for millennia by the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, 'The People of the Inlet'. Some ten thousand people are believed to have lived in the area, setting up camps and erecting their summer houses along the foreshore in the late spring as part of their seasonal round. The village of Whey-ah-Wichen ('facing the wind') was located in the present Cates Park. The Tsleil-Waututh Nation and the District of North Vancouver signed a cultural agreement and protocol for Whey-ah-Wichen and Cates Park in 2000.

Europeans arrived in Burrard Inlet in the middle of the nineteenth century to exploit the timber and quickly began to displace the First Nations communities. Before century's end the cities of North Vancouver and Vancouver were well established. The forests around Cates Park began to be cut down towards the end of the First World War. Shipping magnate Robert Dollar (1844-1932) built a sawmill and wharf at Roche Point in 1916. The workers' community that subsequently developed around the mill became known as Dollarton. Ruins of the mill, which closed in 1942, survive near the foot of Sea Shell Lane.



*The McKenzie Barge and Dollarton Shipyard properties, facing west from the Cates Park wharf. The cabin is located on the foreshore, below the vertical line drawn in the sky. (Carole Itter, ca. 1990s)*



The area was linked to North Vancouver by the Dollarton Highway in 1930. It came to be used for shipbuilding and other marine industries, principally by McKenzie Barge and Derrick Co. Ltd. (later McKenzie Barge and Marine Ways Ltd.) and the Dollarton Shipyard (Noble Towing). Both were located just west of Cates Park, which had been developed in 1959. Numerous squatters and tenants lived in cabins along the foreshore. One was artist Al Neil. The industrial sites were recently acquired by Polygon Homes, which is currently developing Cates Landing, with 95 residential units, on a 4.74-acre site.

## History

Al Neil resided in the cabin on and off from 1966. Carole Itter became a co-resident thirteen years later, and both lived here (and in a second home in Vancouver) until their eviction in June 2015. The history of the cabin that follows has largely been excerpted from a report by Nancy Kirkpatrick. The full, illustrated report, which includes a history of squatting on Burrard Inlet, is reproduced as an appendix.<sup>1</sup>

The cabin was built in the 1920s or early 1930s as one of hundreds of squatters' dwellings along the Burrard Inlet foreshore. They provided homes for marginalized people who were forced to 'squat' by poverty or because they deliberately chose an alternative lifestyle off the grid. The Blue Cabin was reportedly first moored on a barge in Coal Harbour, in Vancouver (near Stanley Park); then moved across the inlet to Dollarton, in the District of North Vancouver. Marty McKenzie of McKenzie Barge and Derrick, its Dollarton landlord, said that the cabin was built in the 1920s and moved to Dollarton in 1932. Neil was told a slightly different story by Vince Mason, one of the oldest workers at McKenzie Barge, who said that it was built in the 1930s by a Scandinavian (perhaps Norwegian) carpenter / craftsman as his home. According to Mason, when the carpenter found a job at McKenzie Barge, he had the cabin towed to the Dollarton foreshore and lifted onto pilings.<sup>2</sup>

The cabin became one of several inhabited by beach dwellers and/or workers at McKenzie Barge. Whether the cabin's builder was technically a squatter, an owner, or a tenant of McKenzie Barge (with or without paying rent) is unclear and moot. Squatter communities such as this grew up all around Burrard Inlet. Some shacks, cabins, and larger houses sat on rafts or barges (they were known as 'float-houses'), while others were fixed on pilings. Many squatters here at Dollarton and elsewhere in Burrard Inlet were artists. The most celebrated was writer Malcolm Lowry, who lived in a succession of shacks near the Blue Cabin. The relatively luxurious float-house community at Coal Harbour remained into the 1970s,<sup>3</sup> and the others that survived around the inlet – including a squatter community at Maplewood mud flats, a short distance west of Dollarton – were also removed in that decade. The Blue Cabin is believed to be the last extant squatter cabin on Burrard Inlet, a unique survivor of what was once a common and important way of life in this maritime environment.

In September 1966, while Al Neil was acting as a temporary lightkeeper at Point Atkinson, in West Vancouver, he spoke with Ralph McKenzie of McKenzie Barge about the possibility of moving into the

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<sup>1</sup> Nancy Kirkpatrick, 'Report on Foreshore Cabin Adjacent to Future Polygon Development and Cates Park,' North Vancouver Museum and Archives, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> McKenzie's version was provided by Glen Alteen. Mason's story was told to Al Neil and reported to Nancy Kirkpatrick. The present consultant initiated additional research on the cabin's history and its builder, but no new sources emerged. Since the history of the cabin is oral and not documentary, the story will surely remain fuzzy and somewhat contradictory. This is the nature of oral history.

<sup>3</sup> Harold Kalman, *Exploring Vancouver*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 1974, p. 235. The float-house was a common sight along Canada's shores, particularly in BC and Newfoundland. In both places houses were often moved by barge.

cabin, which sat vacant. McKenzie agreed. He provided the cabin with electricity and charged Neil rent, presumably nominal. According to Neil, Robert and Brian McKenzie considered him a beach watchman.

A decade later, Cates Park had been developed. All that remained along the beach adjacent to the McKenzie Barge site were two squatter shacks (reportedly dwellings of McKenzie workers that had escaped the general razing of shacks in the later 1950s) and an illegally-beached freighter, the *Island Prince*. According to Neil, after the freighter was demolished in 1978, the Ports Police 'zeroed in on the two squatters' shacks on the beach.' By this time, the shacks had been occupied by a series of residents, including 'workers from North Van, temporarily unemployed and latterly, itinerant hippies.' After the Ports Police evicted the squatters and demolished the shacks, 'they spotted my cabin which always looked nice.' They handed him an eviction notice and 'told [him] with grins on their faces to get out within a week and they just walked away.' Bob McKenzie looked at the eviction notice, called the Port and arranged for the cabin to be spared. Neil said, 'he liked having me on the beach as an extra watchman.'

In later years, Neil and Itter enlisted the help of musician-carpenter Vern Clare to help with the upkeep of the cabin and its surroundings.<sup>4</sup> The cabin is the subject of new documentary film by Krista Lomax, commissioned by the North Vancouver Museum and Archives and supported by Port Metro Vancouver (*Al Neil and Carole Itter's Blue Cabin*, 2015).

### Ownership

McKenzie Barge would have owned the land to the high-water mark, as dictated by British Columbia property law. Whether or not it considered itself to be the owner of the cabin is unclear. Al Neil served as a beach watchman and paid rent to the McKenzies, so he would have been a resident tenant and not a squatter. When, in the 1970s, the port authority evicted other squatters but spared Neil's cabin, it evidently believed it had control over the cabin. Whether or not Port Metro Vancouver was actually the owner would have been a legally murky issue.

In 2015 Al Neil and Carole Itter vacated the cabin and asked Glen Alteen of grunt gallery to act as steward. They signed the cabin over to Port Metro Vancouver in the expectation that it would help grunt obtain insurance. Port Metro Vancouver didn't see itself as actually owning the cabin, even though it was on the Port's foreshore. The cabin was considered to be abandoned property and grunt gallery was seen as having scavenged it. If, however, McKenzie Barge did own the cabin, then possession would have passed to Polygon Homes, which purchased the McKenzie property. Polygon cooperated fully with grunt gallery and provided funds to move it from the foreshore, so in effect Polygon gave the cabin to grunt. In either event, all interested parties have accepted the donation to grunt gallery. Grunt is considered by all interested parties to be the cabin's present owner. Grunt is pursuing legal documentation from Port Metro Vancouver.

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<sup>4</sup> Information in this and the following section includes material from Glenn Alteen.



## The cabin and its design

The Blue Cabin is about 12 feet by 24 feet in size and consists of a single room, its long dimension formerly oriented north-south. The entrance, in the centre of the north end, opened onto a large deck. A lean-to storage shed stood along the west side. The south side faced the water, which was accessed by a gravel beach.



*The entrance to the cabin and the deck, with storage to the right, looking south, 1996. (Carole Itter)*

The construction is conventional timber framing. The details, however, are quite eccentric, made remarkable by the many curved features. The roof is bowed, in the form of a low ellipse, supported by rafters having curved top edges. The window and door surrounds are segmental in form, with the four segments around the windows forming a circle. The exterior corner boards were also segmental. These features are surely original (they were in place when Neil took over the cabin in 1966). They were evidently playful, signature features of the craftsman, reportedly Scandinavian, who built the cabin as his home.

The timber structure comprises the following components. All dimensions are approximate.

### Floor structure and floor

- Heavy support beams, around 8" x 12" and rough-cut, at approximately 2-foot spacing, running in the long dimension of the cabin. The beams rested on piles and, as the water line receded, also on stacks of concrete blocks. The beams show considerable deterioration; see Section 4.3.
- Joists of sawn dimensioned lumber, approx. 3" x 8" @ approx. 2-foot spacing, running perpendicularly and resting on the beams. These are in generally good condition.



- Floorboards, about 4 inches wide. These are exposed in the back half of the cabin; in the front area they have been covered with ¼-inch plywood, painted in places.

### **Walls**

- The wall structure is not exposed. Presumably it is a stud wall with horizontal strapping, because the finishing boards are applied vertically.
- Tar paper inside the walls provides waterproofing and insulation.
- Exterior sheathing consists of horizontal boards, about 5 inches exposed.
- Interior sheathing is mostly vertical tongue-and-groove boards, about 2 inches wide. The side walls towards the rear are finished with plain vertical boards, about 6 inches wide .
- Decorative curved, segmental boards (Carole Itter calls them 'scallops') on the walls both inside (beneath the ceiling) and outside (as door and window surrounds).

### **Roof**

- The roof is supported by rafters, about 2 inches wide and varying in depth, to establish the elliptical curve of the roof.
- The tops and bottoms of the rafters are finished with decorative mouldings.
- The purlins are about 1" x 1" and shaped, spaced at about 2 feet.
- The ceiling boards are about 8 inches wide.
- The roof surface is rolled, heavy roofing paper, sealed with tar at the joins. Small leaks have occurred in the past and been patched.



*Interior detail and view, 2015. (Harold Kalman)*



The interior is essentially a single space, with the only subdivided feature being a kitchen alcove in one corner. The space was dominated by the tools of the occupants' art: Neil's upright piano and Itter's drawing board, with shelves behind it to hold her paints and supplies. The cabin also contained a wood stove and furniture for living and sleeping. The beams are painted red, blue, and green. The walls are partly green, partly natural wood, and partly panelled with other finishes.



*Interior views: Left, the kitchen alcove; right, Al Neil's piano, which was given to artist Luke Blackstone, both 2015. (Michael Jackson)*

### *Exterior colours*

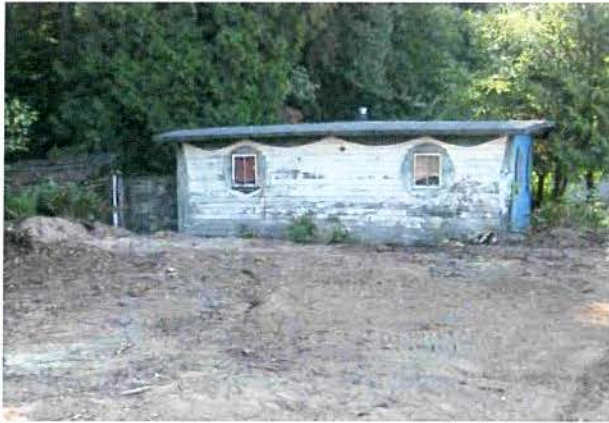
The building is commonly referred to as the 'Blue Cabin', although it has been blue for far less than half its life. It was simply whitewashed when it was towed to Dollarton. Carole Itter reports that Al Neil and his first wife, Marguerite Neil, painted the cabin brown, using paint that they found at the nearby shipyard. This would have been at some time between 1966, when Neil first occupied the cabin, and 1979, when it is clearly brown in an image from the film by Dave Rimmer.<sup>5</sup>



*East elevation, facing the water, painted brown, c.1979 (from Dave Rimmer film) and blue, 2015 (Michael Jackson).*

<sup>5</sup> David Rimmer, 'Al Neil – A Portrait,' film, 1979.





*West elevation, which retains early whitewash, after tree removal and grading, 2015. (Michael Jackson)*

Al Neil and Carole Itter subsequently repainted the exterior, likely in the 1980s. They discussed colour options and settled on a combination of green and blue, starting with green at the top and changing to blue at the bottom. Their choice reflects their attraction to primary colours. Itter says that she was inspired by something she saw in Haida Gwaii.<sup>6</sup> Photos show that the door and window sash were painted blue, the segmental window surrounds (which Itter calls 'scallop') were painted green and red, and the curved door surrounds and door frame were painted green and red respectively. The soffits were painted orange. The paint was applied mostly with rags, rather than brushes. The west side was left whitewashed, since it was difficult to access and virtually invisible.

Carole Itter repainted the cabin, probably twice since then, most recently in 2005. She removed the red (overpainting it with blue) about five years ago.



*Entrance elevation, c. 1980s-1990s (left, from Al Neil web site) and 2015 (right, Michael Jackson photo)*

Itter has described the colour scheme and the reasons that she and Neil selected it:

The siding of the cabin exterior was painted with Ted Harris Paint Co. colours. Green was 20-14, exterior latex. Blue was their 25-12, in exterior latex.

<sup>6</sup> Carole Itter, telephone conversation with Hal Kalman, August 27, 2015; also e-mail letter from Itter to Kalman, November 28, 2015.

The green was started at the top of the siding, and the blue at the base, going up with a gradual mix between the two colours. So the mid-way area of the siding was a sort of turquoise. The decision to paint it this way was made between myself and Al Neil. The intent was to enhance the lighting when the tides were high and the east wall was in full sun. Orange paint, Ted Harris Co.'s 5-13, exterior latex, was painted on the soffits. It was chosen because McKenzie Barge & Marine Way's colours were pale blue and orange. The west side of the cabin has only its original whitewash on the siding. It would have taken too much scaffolding to get at that side with the blue/green combination.

The scallops around each window were lightly sanded each spring, then handstained, usually with paint on a rag, in places that were raw. Then a coat of latex Varathane was added each year. A fair patina was built up this way.

In general, we regarded the paint as a protection from the elements. We also studied the cabin from a distance, usually from the wharf at Cates Park, to decide if the colour choices allowed the cabin to fit in to that place.<sup>7</sup>

We retain the name 'Blue Cabin' in the present report because it is familiar and it describes the image of the cabin imprinted in most people's memories.

### Site and assemblages

Al Neil and Carole Itter's home and workplace extended well beyond the cabin and the deck. Their living space included the beach, which was littered with driftwood logs that came and went with the tides, a privy, and a number of 'assemblages' placed around the cabin. The principal assemblages were to the north and east of the cabin, partly on boards painted to resemble a piano keyboard, which formed a deck. The assemblages were sculptural montages composed of found artifacts and other objects. The largest artifact was 'Maxine's Boat', an overturned dinghy; the smallest included bottles and floats. The surrounding forest, the foreshore, the water, and the drift logs were also important components of the environmental ensemble.

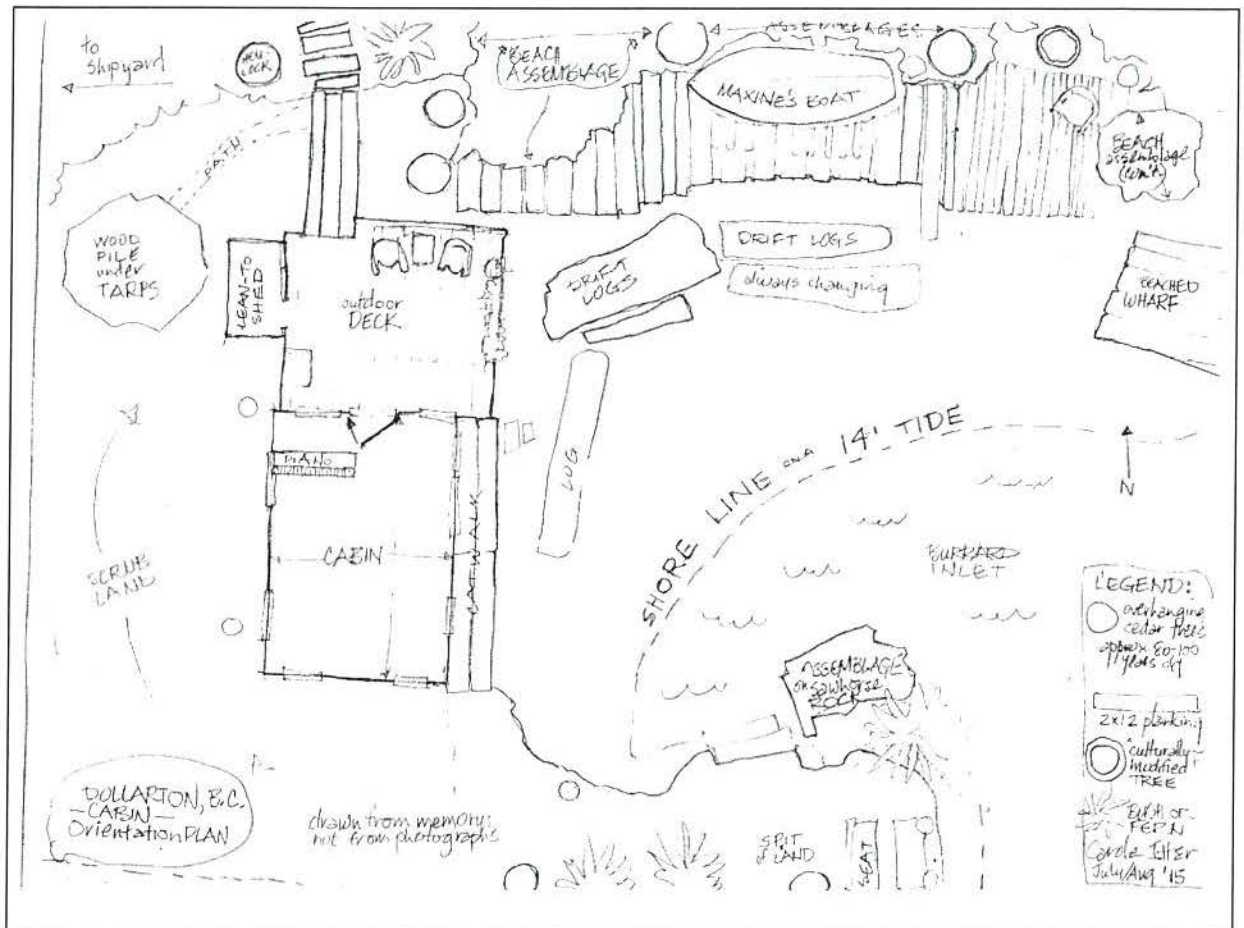
The cabin was accessed from the Cates Park parking lot by a trail through the park, steps, and a catwalk. The slope down from the parking lot was heavily forested with cedar and hemlock, while north and west of the cabin were small, deciduous trees and brush.

Carole Itter kindly drew a site plan and an elevation for this report.

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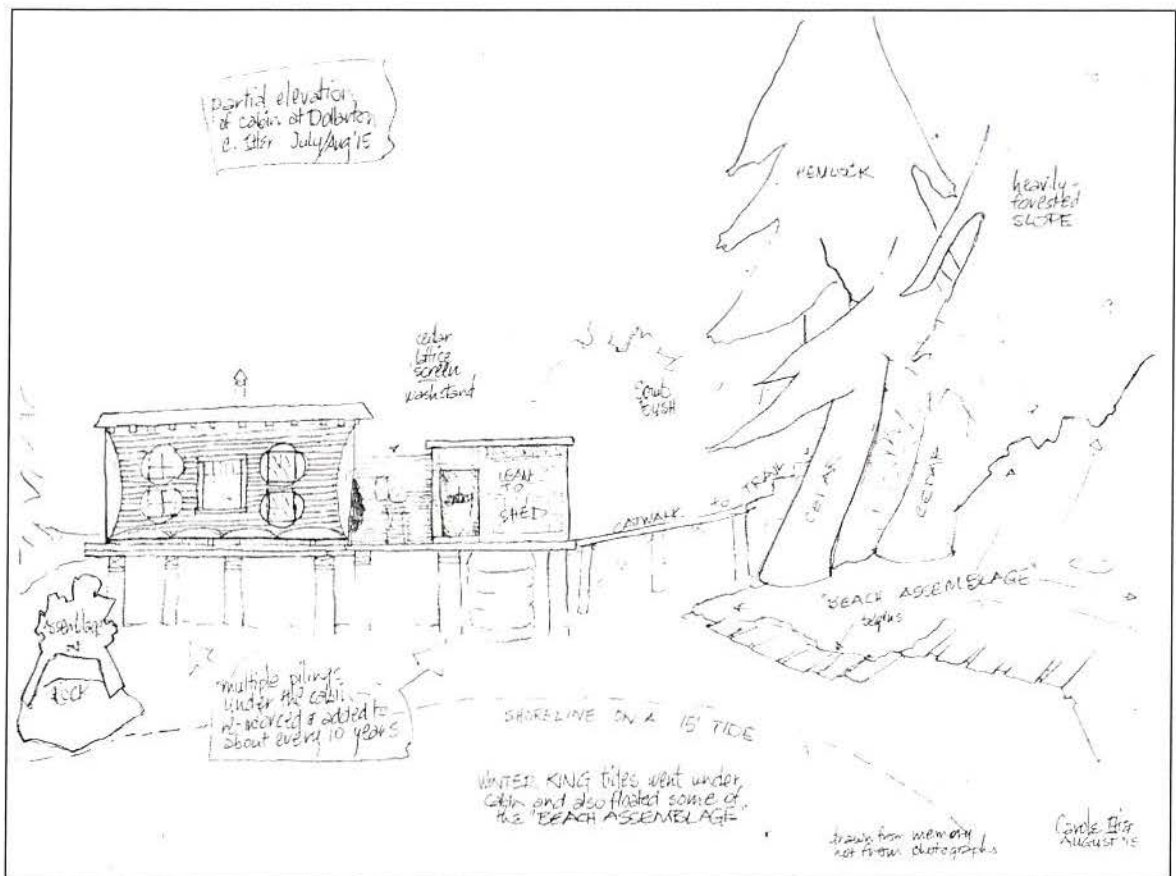
<sup>7</sup> Carole Itter, e-mail to Harold Kalman, September 6, 2015. Ted Harris Paints, at 757 East Hastings Street, a long-time familiar Vancouver business, opened in 1947. It was closed by Bob Harris, the son of Ted Harris, on September 30, 2009. John Mackie, 'Ted Harris Paints: An icon closes on Hastings street,' *Vancouver Sun*, October 2, 2009; Available at <http://www.vancouversun.com/life/Harris+Paints+icon+closes+Hastings+street/2055742/story.html> (accessed November 24, 2015).





Blue Cabin, site plan. (Carole Itter, July-August 2015)





Blue Cabin, view from south. (Carole Itter, July-August 2015)

Some of the artifacts from the assemblages were removed when the cabin was vacated in 2015, but others were abandoned on the site.<sup>8</sup>



*Portion of 'Beach Assemblage' with Maxine's Boat and keyboard deck, 2011 (Carole Itter)*



*Remains of 'Beach Assemblage', July 2015. (Harold Kalman)*

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<sup>8</sup> Grunt gallery has documented the artifacts in photographs and has records of those that were moved.



Music critic Alexander Varty described the cabin in 2005:

After taking a hidden woodland trail to his rough cabin – which, perched on top of a small, permanently beached barge, seemed as much houseboat as house – we drank tea and discussed art and music to the accompaniment of his cat, making its delicate way across the keys of a battered upright piano. Slanting through dusty windows, the sun lit up Neil's flotsam assemblages just as surely as the pianist's wayward yet erudite conversation illuminated the idea that it's possible to build a life around constant exploration. For that lesson, I'll always be thankful, as will the thousands of others who learned it under this madman, mystic, and living legend's persistent tutelage.<sup>9</sup>

## Relocation

The Blue Cabin remained on the Dollarton foreshore until June 2015, when it was once again relocated. The adjacent property had been purchased by Polygon Homes, with the intention of redeveloping it as the Cates Landing residential complex. It was necessary to remediate the foreshore, which had suffered severe environmental damage from heavy metals and other chemicals as a result of the long-time industrial use by McKenzie Barge and its successors. Environmental regulations required the removal of the cabin, regardless of the intentions or desires of the stakeholders.

And many stakeholders there were! The cabin was situated within the jurisdiction of the District of North Vancouver. It sat next to Cates Park, which is managed jointly by the District of North Vancouver and the Tsleil-Waututh Nation. The foreshore belongs to Port Metro Vancouver. And the adjacent site is owned by Polygon Homes. Nobody had legal title to the actual cabin and none of the above groups was willing to take responsibility for it. Al Neil and Carole Itter were widely viewed squatters although, as mentioned above, they were actually resident tenants who considered McKenzie Barge to have been their landlords. They provided a measure of security for the company and paid it nominal rent.



The cabin being moved and a view of it in storage at Canexus Chemicals. (Michael Jackson, Harold Kalman)

Neil and Itter were served several eviction notices, beginning in November 2014, and left in May. Their plight became a *cause célèbre*, splashed on the pages of local newspapers and publicized on social and other media. Nancy Kirkpatrick, director of the North Vancouver Museum and Archives, prepared a

<sup>9</sup> Georgia Straight, quoted in Kirkpatrick, 'Report.'

report that helped to establish the artistic and cultural value of the cabin. Her report is reproduced in the appendix.

Glenn Alteen, director of grunt gallery, became involved in rescuing the cabin before the media began to give it attention. Neil and Itter granted Alteen the role of the cabin's steward, and Neil gave his piano to Vancouver artist Luke Blackstone. Alteen then enlisted the support of Barbara Cole, Esther Rausenberg, and others in the art community. Collectively they successfully appealed for support and money.

Polygon Homes agreed to give the grunt gallery time to move the cabin. It was removed from the waterfront site on June 23, 2015. The movers, Supreme Structural Transport Ltd., transported it to the secured grounds of Canexus Chemicals Canada LP, North Vancouver, and placed it on skids. Canexus generously offered a one-year lease, with an option to renew, to store the cabin.<sup>10</sup> It was learned in November 2015 that Canexus is likely to sell the property, effective in June 2016.

### Profiles of Al Neil and Carole Itter



*Al Neil on the deck of the cabin, 1973. (photo by Nina Raginsky)*

**Al Neil** (b. 1924) is a musician, composer, collage artist, sculptor, and writer. He is renowned on the West Coast for his experimental and avant-garde works. A World War II veteran and jazz pianist, he began playing in Vancouver clubs in the late 1940s and was a central figure in the 1950s and 60s at the Cellar, where he performed with other artists and with his own group, the Al Neil Quartet. He later

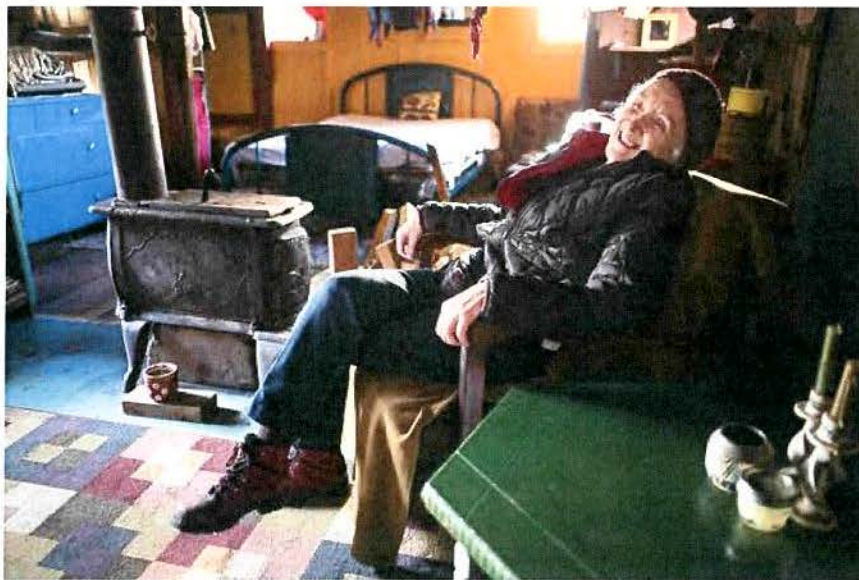
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<sup>10</sup> The client group paid \$12,000 for the move, which was reportedly below cost. The storage agreement (lease) is between Visible Art Society (the society that operates the grunt gallery) and Canexus Corporation. Jillian Cooke managed the project for Canexus.



introduced a wholly unique and unusual, free jazz style and released several recordings, which were re-issued in compilation formats in the 1980s and 90s.

In addition to his music, Neil is known for his writing, visual art, and extensive artistic collaborations with artist Carole Itter. He produced memorable multimedia performances in the 1970s and mixed-media collages from 1980s. His works have been exhibited at the Vancouver Art Gallery, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Western Front in Vancouver, and the Musee d'art Moderne in Paris. He is the subject of a 1979 film (*Al Neil: A Portrait*) by the celebrated filmmaker David Rimmer. In 2008, Al Neil received an Honorary Doctor of Letters from Emily Carr University of Art and Design. In 2014, he received the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award at the Mayor's Arts Awards in Vancouver, which recognizes "an individual who has made significant contributions over his or her lifetime to the cultural vibrancy of the city." From 1966 to 2015 he divided his time between Vancouver and the foreshore cabin at Dollarton.



*Carole Itter in the cabin, 2015. (John Lehmann/The Globe and Mail)*

**Carole Itter** (b. 1939) is a sculptor, art instructor, experimental artist, film maker, oral historian, and writer. She has received awards from the Canada Council for the Arts and the British Columbia Arts Council. In 1989 she received the prestigious VIVA (Vancouver Institute of Visual Arts) award. The oral history of Vancouver's Strathcona neighbourhood (*Opening Doors: In Vancouver's East End*, 1979) that she co-wrote with Daphne Marlatt was re-published in 2011 as one of the *Vancouver 125* legacy books to celebrate the City's 125th anniversary.

Many of Itter's artistic works involve 'found objects' and natural materials. Her opposition to consumer culture is a thread that weaves throughout her work. She has become known for large-scale installations which use recycled materials and objects from her surroundings to create art with emotional resonance. Works by Itter are in the collections of the Canada Council Art Bank, the Vancouver Public Library, the Vancouver Art Gallery, and private collections.

## 2.2 Heritage significance

The heritage significance of a historic place can be determined by identifying its heritage values – those characteristics that are valued – and arriving at a synthesis of the values. The list of heritage values of the Blue Cabin that follows has been compiled from the author’s observations and research. It includes values identified by people who were consulted during the course of the project.

### Heritage values

Heritage values are usually defined in a Statement of Significance (‘SOS’), a tool developed by Parks Canada. The SOS also provides a concise description of the historic place and lists its ‘character-defining elements’. Conservation projects are expected to retain the character-defining elements in order to preserve the heritage value of the place.

The principal heritage values of the Blue Cabin are:

- The cabin was likely built by an anonymous Scandinavian (reportedly Norwegian) builder-craftsman, who is representative of the new Vancouverites who helped to develop local trades.
- The cabin has rare or unique architectural features, particularly seen in the recurrent use of curved components, including the roof profile, window surrounds, and segmental boards beneath the eaves and at the top of the interior walls.
- The cabin was further transformed into a work of art by artist-residents Al Neil and Carole Itter, who created the idiosyncratic colour scheme and filled the place and its surroundings with music and art.
- The cabin is a work of art in its own right: a joint creation over the period of about 80 years by its Scandinavian-Canadian builder, Al Neil, and Carole Itter. It has always been more than a utilitarian shelter.
- For nearly fifty years, the Blue Cabin was the home of musician, visual artist, and writer Al Neil, who is widely recognized as one of the foremost experimental artists in the region. (Initially his primary home, and subsequently a secondary home.)
- For 35 years, the cabin was the part-time home of Carole Itter, a notable visual artist, filmmaker, and writer.
- Neil’s and Itter’s life and art spilled out of the cabin into the surrounding space, evidenced by the deck, the small structures, and the many works of sculpture and assemblages.
- The cabin was one of several artists’ residences that comprised a vital artists’ community along the Dollarton foreshore. The most celebrated resident was writer Malcolm Lowry.
- The cabin is believed to be the last remaining squatter’s dwelling along the Burrard Inlet foreshore.

- The cabin symbolizes a once popular, but now vanished, way of life when people of little means could live 'off the grid' in 'squats' along the waterfront, yet within an urbanized, metropolitan area.
- The forced removal of the cabin and the development of Cates Landing represent the ongoing gentrification of the Burrard Inlet shore.
- The issue of the ownership of the Blue Cabin emphasizes the jurisdictional grey zone that is the Burrard Inlet foreshore.

The heritage significance of the Blue Cabin is a synthesis of these values. They provide the Blue Cabin with considerable architectural, historical, cultural, and social significance.



### 3. Options for future location and use

This chapter discusses alternative long-term locations and uses. They were intended in the preliminary report to help find a solution for the Blue Cabin. The final choice for the Blue Cabin combines aspects of more than one of the approaches described here.

Section 3.3 recommends a particular solution which has been inspired by these options. We retain the full array of options in this final report for reference, and also as evidence that many projects of a similar nature have been successfully completed.

#### 3.1 No interim use

The Blue Cabin Committee has discussed the possibility of placing the Blue Cabin in a short-term, interim location while arrangements are made for its long-term accommodation and a detailed plan is drawn up for its conservation and use. The author respectfully recommends that the Blue Cabin *not* be moved to an interim site. The cabin is secure in its present storage location, at least until June 2016 and possibly longer. Any short-term move might require structural modifications (e.g., to the substructure), and these could constrain or prejudice changes that will have to be made for the long-term use.

Furthermore, our own experience with similar situations has shown that adding a move or an interim use, however carefully executed, often causes wear and tear on the building. This in turn could damage the cabin and affect its long-term viability. Also, preparation for an interim use would cost money, and all resources – even if offered by an outside party – are best saved for the final preparation, relocation, and conservation.

#### 3.2 Potential long-term locations and uses

The permanent installation of the Blue Cabin should balance conservation and use. The first respects the architectural, historical, and artistic significance of the cabin, whereas the latter takes advantages of its being a usable, if small, space in good condition and having a stellar legacy.

The future use of the Blue Cabin might emphasize either use or conservation, although both must be considered. The stakeholders have clearly indicated a desire to repurpose the cabin for a beneficial new cultural use. Nevertheless, the future disposition should also include a program of both short- and long-term conservation. Conservation is discussed further in Sections 4.1 to 4.3.

The most desirable outcome is a cultural use that will allow public access, whether frequent or occasional, while not exceeding the carrying capacity of the structure. In any situation, the risk of damage from overuse or vandalism, as well as addressing the natural degradation of the materials, must be taken into consideration.

Repurposing the Blue Cabin as a cultural facility for music and/or the visual arts would make a good fit with its history and potential interpretation. So too would the more specific proposal that it become a facility for an artist residency. Another possibility would be presenting the cabin as a cultural artifact in its own right, without a significant use, but this option has experienced less traction.



The precedents that follow look at the alternatives. They are followed by a list of various locations that have been suggested by stakeholders or added by the consultant.

The five examples that follow illustrate a range of options for cultural use. In any of these situations, the cabin could be used to for an artist-in-residency program or other cultural use, and simultaneously to interpret themes such as Al Neil and Carole Itter's stories and art, the former squatter community, aboriginal histories, maritime history, the importance of waterways for our resource-based economies, cultural production in non-traditional settings, and more. Interpretation is discussed in Section 4.4.

The first two options (the Al Purdy A-Frame and the Vancouver park fieldhouses) emphasize use over conservation. The last option (Sam McGee's Cabin) emphasizes conservation over use. The third and fourth options (Leighton Artists' Colony and LightShed) are new constructions and their conservation at present is limited to a program of maintenance.

## Precedents



*The Al Purdy A-Frame (Vancouver Sun)*

The **Al Purdy A-Frame**, the former home of poet Al Purdy (1918-2000) and his wife, Eurithe Purdy, **has been adapted for use in an artist-residency program**. Located on Roblin Lake, near Ameliasburg in Prince Edward County, Ontario, was begun by the Purdys in 1957. They lived there until they moved to B.C. in 1987. The Al Purdy A-Frame Association has upgraded the place in situ. It now serves as a funded, short-term residency for writers. See <http://www.alpurdy.ca/><sup>11</sup>

- With respect to the Blue Cabin, if it is repurposed for an artist residency, changes may be made to accommodate the new use, consistent with respect for its heritage integrity. This is discussed with Rehabilitation in Section 4.2 below.

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<sup>11</sup> The A-Frame has been featured in a recent film, *Al Purdy Was Here*, by Brian D. Johnson (2015). See Geoff Pevere, 'The man who outlived himself,' *Globe and Mail*, September 15, 2015, p. L2. Al Purdy was a visitor to Al Neil's Dollarton cabin.



*Vancouver Society of Storytelling performs in the Slocan Park Fieldhouse (Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation)*

The **Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation's studio residencies program** uses **re-purposed park fieldhouses** and other buildings as work-only studios for artists. Successful applicants have the use of the place in exchange for providing community arts-based engagement. More than 50 artists are active in 13 different parks. One such residency is the Vancouver Society of Storytelling (VSOS), which uses the Slocan Park Fieldhouse to bring diverse groups of people together to exchange stories, from folktales and fables to personal narratives. See <http://vancouver.ca/parks-recreation-culture/field-house-studio-residencies-in-parks.aspx>



*The Cardinal Studio at the Banff Centre, designed by Douglas Cardinal, which is particularly well suited for musicians. (Banff Centre)*

**Purpose-built studios**, rather than re-used old structures, have been constructed at the Banff Centre to **provide working space for musicians, writers, and visual artists**. As with the Vancouver Park Board program this provides artists with the facility for a limited period as part of a funded artist-in-residence program. Engagement with the community and provision of limited opportunities for public access are desirable, but less essential. Residency is supported with dedicated funding. Nine studios for independent residents in the Leighton Artists' Colony at the Banff Centre have been designed by celebrated architects and are themselves works of art. The photo illustrates the Cardinal Studio, designed by Douglas Cardinal, which is particularly well suited for musicians.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> For the Leighton Artists' Colony, whose cabins were commissioned from leading Canadian architects, see <http://www.banffcentre.ca/leightoncolony/studios.asp>





*LightShed, by Liz Magor (Public Art Private Views, <http://publicartprivateviews.com/documentaries/>)*

**LightShed**, a sculpture by Liz Magor (2004), is an outdoor sculpture without any utilitarian purpose. It takes the form of a reduced-scale boat shed on stilts that are reminiscent of piles. It is located on the seawall of Harbour Green Park in Coal Harbour. The work was commissioned by Grosvenor Canada Ltd., the developer of the adjacent residences. Its creation and installation were subjected to the processes and guidelines established for the City of Vancouver's public art program. It is interesting to note that the Blue Cabin was originally located in Coal Harbour.



*Interior of replica of Sam McGee's Cabin (MacBride Museum)*

A replica of **Sam McGee's cabin** is located within a museum as an indoor artifact. It can be found in the MacBride Museum, Whitehorse. This is the cabin of the subject of Robert Service's popular poem, *The Cremation of Sam McGee*. See

<http://www.macbridemuseum.com/permanentcollection.html>

- With respect to the Blue Cabin, Nancy Kirkpatrick, Director, North Vancouver Museum and Archives, formerly suggested cutting off the front elevation and a part of a porch and placing it within the North Vancouver facility. However, she made this proposal when there were pressures to resolve the cabin's future quickly, and she no longer supports the idea of truncating the cabin (nor does the present author). If the Museum could accommodate the entire cabin, this would be supportable by the author.
- Alternatively, some small historic buildings are **located outdoors, on the grounds of a museum or other major cultural facility**.
- In any museum setting, the emphasis would be on the conservation of the Blue Cabin as a cultural artifact. The primary use would be as an object that interprets the life and art of Al Neil and Carole Itter, squatting on Burrard Inlet, the cabin's pre-Neil history, and other associated themes. The cabin would not be upgraded to meet current building standards.

## Potential locations



*Aerial view of Larwill Park (City of Vancouver)*

Other Sights for Artists' Projects, a Vancouver-based artists' collective, has suggested a **temporary location in Larwill Park, Vancouver**, the proposed site of the new Vancouver Art Gallery. The VAG supports this option. The client's and VAG's current suggestion for the Blue Cabin is only as an interim use, since the site would be redeveloped. However, as stated above, the consultant does not support an interim use. If the cabin could be permanently located on the site as part of the VAG complex, then we would consider this to be a more attractive option.



*The Cates Park Foreshore. (blog.wfgates.com)*

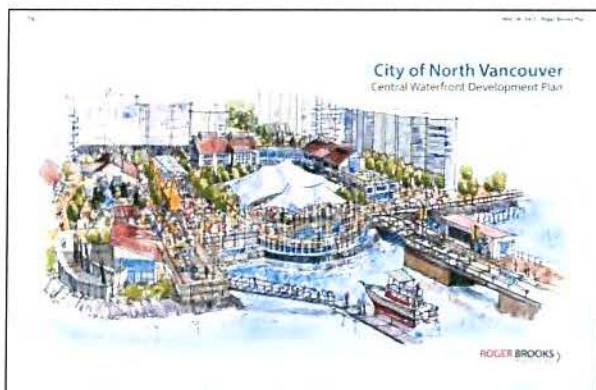
**A location on the waterfront in or near Cates Park (Dollarton), District of North Vancouver.** The cabin could be relocated in or near Cates Park, close to its historic location. It could be placed on the foreshore on piles or a foundation, or else floated on a barge moored to a dock. This would require approval from Port Metro Vancouver and/or the District of North Vancouver (DNV). If placed above the foreshore it would require approval from the DNV and, if in Cates Park, by the DNV and the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, who manage the park jointly. This has the distinct advantage of being close to the cabin's original location and, if on the foreshore, in a setting similar to its historical context.





*Rendering of Cates Landing (Polygon Homes)*

**A location on the Cates Landing property being developed by Polygon Homes, District of North Vancouver** (This option is identified here but it is no longer practicable.) Cates Landing is the residential development between the cabin site and the Dollarton Highway, occupying 4.74 acres. The remediation required for its permit forced the Cabin to be moved. Several people suggested locating the cabin on the Polygon site, whether on dedicated public land, strata amenity space, or even placed on a rooftop. Polygon Homes points out that this is not possible, because the development has progressed too far to make any changes. A lengthy and public rezoning process was required to achieve a CD-1 classification and an approved plan, and many residences have already been sold. The site is fully built out and the publicly-dedicated land is located on the riparian zone of a creek, on which development is prohibited.

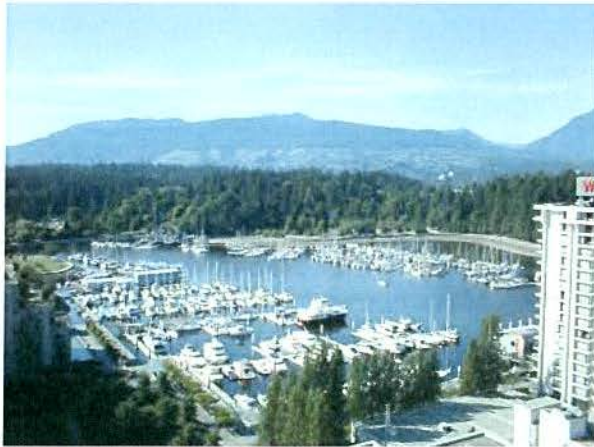


*The Shipyards and Shipbuilders' Square, City of North Vancouver; Central Waterfront Development Plan, cover (City of North Vancouver)*

**A location in The Shipyards or Shipbuilders' Square at the foot of Lonsdale Street, City of North Vancouver.** Several stakeholders have suggested relocating the cabin here. It has been suggested that the cabin be associated with the proposed new North Vancouver Museum and Archives, the new Presentation House Gallery, and/or within the historic Shipyard precinct. This is a highly accessible and well used waterfront location in North Vancouver, features that compensate for its location at a considerable distance from Dollarton. Approval – and perhaps participation – would be required from the City of North Vancouver and likely also Pinnacle

International or another of the private developers involved in the area. (These entities have not been contacted by the consultant.)

- The Pacific Great Eastern station, another historic building, which was originally located at the foot of Lonsdale Street, is also being considered for inclusion in Shipbuilders' Square.



*A view of Coal Harbour (<http://www.downtownsuites.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/189792-1.jpg>)*

**A location on the waterfront at Coal Harbour, Vancouver.** If the cabin were to be located on the south shore of Burrard Inlet, whether on the foreshore or afloat, Coal Harbour would most appropriate, because that was the cabin's original location. Jil Weaving, Vancouver Park Board, suggests placing the cabin near the Coal Harbour Community Centre.

**A location in another public park or public place.** The cabin could be moved to any of a number of public parks or public lands. Jil Weaving, Vancouver Parks Board, proposes McLean Park, Kitsilano Beach, and Strathcona Park as possible destinations. Possible other locations that have been suggested by interested parties include Granville Island (by Alma Lee of the Board of Trustees) and the Burnaby campus of Simon Fraser University (by Melanie O'Brian, Director, Audain Gallery, SFU).

**Place in a children's camp, to be used for arts and crafts**

David Duckworth of Camp Jubilee on Indian Arm, an arts-and-crafts camp for children, suggests relocating the cabin to the camp. The camp operator would be responsible for management. A similar proposal, from District of North Vancouver Councillor Lisa Muri, would locate the cabin at Maplewood Farm, where it would be an attraction for children.

**Move to private property and retain for private use**

A number of offers have been received from private property owners, including Eric Pawlett (a cousin of artist E.J. Hughes) of the Sunshine Coast; and an artists' retreat in Langley. This or relocation to another private property would require appropriate safeguards to protect the cabin and its appearance. The best tool might be a Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA) negotiated by the property owner and the municipality. See Section 4.1 for a discussion of HRAs.



- We do not recommend this option, since the Cabin would not be accessible to the public. An exception might be made if the new owner undertook to open it to the public a certain number of times per year; this could be ensured by a clause in the HRA.



*Dengbejs, by Halil Altindere (<http://www.newmedia-art.org/>)*

**Place on the roof of a tall building.** A precedent is *Dengbejs*, by Halil Altindere (2007), a log cabin and another wooden house that were placed on a rooftop in a Turkish city by Kurdish artist Halil Altindere in a 2007 installation (*Dengbejs*). See <http://www.newmedia-art.org/><sup>13</sup>

- The Blue Cabin could be placed on the top of a high-rise building and used as an amenity space (preferably cultural) for the occupants of the building.
- Many other locations that challenge the status quo in a similar spirit could be conceived.

### 3.3 Recommended solution

The Blue Cabin Committee has considered the various options and their variations, and has chosen what it would like to do with the Blue Cabin. The consultant supports this decision, which is presented here as the recommended solution.

The Blue Cabin would be placed on a barge and used as a studio / work place for an artist-in-residence program. A separate, small home for the artist would also be located on the barge. The committee hopes to be able to moor the barge in the region's waterways, including Coal Harbour, Burrard Inlet, False Creek, and/or North Vancouver. No specific site has yet been made available, although discussions are underway.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Yekhan Pinarligil, 'Halil Altindere, Dengbêjs 2007,' Available at <http://www.newmedia-art.org/cgi-bin/show-oeu.asp?lg=FRA&ID=150000000058176>. 'Dengbêj' is Kurdish for 'singer' or 'minstrel'. Colin Browne and Marian Penner Bancroft kindly provided the reference to the project.

<sup>14</sup> City of Vancouver staff have suggested mooring the barge in New Brighton Park, at the east end of Vancouver, near the Second Narrows Bridge, across Burrard Inlet from Dollarton. The consultant does not support this location, since it bears little relationship to the cabin's history and also because visitation at that site is low, other than swimmers in the summer.



This solution would meet the primary objectives of providing for both a good cultural use and good conservation, with opportunities as well for interpretation. It would also present the Blue Cabin as a significant work of art / architecture in its own right.

The committee would also like the Blue Cabin to address a number of societal issues separate from culture and the arts. These include seeing the cabin and the house as demonstrating good practices in environmental sustainability, by making it self-sufficient with solar collector panels, composting toilets, and a rain retrieval system. This would leave the cabin without plumbing and would require only electrical wiring and heat. They also see the artist's residence as representing the small-house movement, which is a popular solution to the current shortage of affordable housing.

The consultant tentatively supports these secondary objectives, but only if they do not interfere with the cabin's use as an artist residency or with its conservation. There is always a potential risk associated with a project's trying to achieve too much, in that it can weaken the primary objectives and messages. On the other hand, the secondary objectives could attract a broader base of support and funding. The two must be balanced.

There is a potential conflict as well in placing the artist's residence on the barge, adjacent to the studio. A residence is by definition a private place, whereas the studio should be made available to the public to ensure community engagement and benefit.<sup>15</sup> The need for both privacy and access could lead to conflicts. Careful thought should therefore be given as to whether to build the residence on the barge.

It is likely that municipal authorities will require that the cabin conform to applicable life-and-safety code requirements. In addition, the cabin should be inspected by a structural engineer to determine whether the structure requires upgrading to accommodate the new use and conform to seismic and other code requirements.

Any alterations that may be made for code compliance, structural upgrading, and/or to accommodate the new use should be done under the oversight of a conservation architect or other conservation professional.<sup>16</sup> Every reasonable effort should be made to minimize the visual impacts of changes, and to take care not to obscure or destroy heritage character-defining elements.

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<sup>15</sup> The studio should be accessible at certain posted times and not continuously, in order to allow the resident artist some quiet work time.

<sup>16</sup> We recommend that the architect or other professional be a member of the Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals (CAHP).

## 4. Conservation and interpretation

As has been stated throughout this report, it is essential that the stewards of the Blue Cabin be committed to a program of conserving the building and its materials, as well as to the public interpretation of the cabin's history and significance.

This chapter addresses those issues. The first section looks at heritage conservation, which is the big-picture question of how to safeguard the integrity of the cabin. Section 4.2 addresses the conservation work that should be done to prolong the life of the materials and the structure. And the final section discusses interpretation.

### 4.1 Heritage protection

The Blue Cabin should be provided with long-term heritage protection. This will prevent demolition or unsympathetic changes, while enabling modifications and upgrades that respect and retain the heritage character of the historic place. It will also ensure that the cabin is safeguarded in the long term, after the current stewards have moved on to other interests.

The regulation of heritage conservation in Canada falls under provincial jurisdiction. The Province of British Columbia, in turn, delegates the responsibility for conservation to local government. Regardless of the Blue Cabin's location and use, its heritage values would best be protected by a municipal heritage protection bylaw (passed by the local government in whose jurisdiction it is located), to complement the good intentions of its stewards.

Protection tools are described in Part 27 of the *Local Government Act*. Two appropriate protection options are available for the Blue Cabin:

**Heritage Designation**, pursuant to Sections 967-969. This provides the historic place with protection against inappropriate change or demolition. It allows change that respects its heritage values, provided that the proposed changes are approved by the municipality, which is usually done upon the recommendation of its heritage commission or committee. Approved changes are described in a Heritage Alteration Permit. Designation is registered against the property title.

A **Heritage Revitalization Agreement ('HRA')**, pursuant to Section 966. The legal owners or stewards of a historic place enter into a voluntary, but binding, agreement with the local government. An HRA balances conservation with change. It offers an opportunity for the local government to relax zoning, use, density, and other land-use regulations. This might be very helpful in the case of the Blue Cabin and its barge, because they well might be non-conforming with respect to existing regulations. The process also permits approved changes that respect heritage character, as with heritage designation. An HRA is also registered against the property title.

It should be noted that the consultant has no experience with the application of either heritage designation or HRAs to floating structures, nor has he received a reliable opinion on this matter. Formal protection may be complicated, since they are land-use regulations that are intended to be tied to

specific properties. It is possible that the Blue Cabin on a barge may not occupy delimited property, unless it is on a registered water lot. Once the final destination(s) for the Blue Cabin has been determined, it will be necessary to enter into constructive discussions with the local government (and its legal counsel) about the applicability of heritage controls.

## 4.2 Conservation treatments

Heritage conservation professionals recognize a number of different approaches that may be taken in the conservation of historic places. These are called ‘conservation treatments’. The different treatments have been developed and defined by international and national heritage agencies.

Parks Canada, which promotes best conservation practices in Canada, recognizes three conservation treatments:

**Preservation** is a program of maintenance and intervention designed to prevent further deterioration and to keep a building or structure ‘as is’ – that is, to respect the present form, material, and integrity.

**Restoration** is the process of returning a building or structure to the appearance of an earlier time by removing later material and by replacing missing elements and details. Restoration must be guided by reliable documentation on the previous appearance; conjecture is not permitted.

**Rehabilitation** is the process of returning a property to a useable state through repair or alteration. Rehabilitation makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features that are significant to the property’s historic, architectural, and cultural values.<sup>17</sup>

Two conservation treatments are potentially applicable to the Blue Cabin: Preservation (i.e., keeping it as is, other than repairs and maintenance) and Rehabilitation (i.e., making upgrades to accommodate a new use, while still retaining the cultural heritage significance). Restoration (i.e., returning the cabin to a past form) would *not* be appropriate, since there is little evidence of the cabin’s early appearance on which to base the restoration.

Preservation is a relatively simple and inexpensive process. It is recommended if the present configuration will work well for the artist residency. However, if it is necessary to introduce changes to accommodate the residency properly, then rehabilitation is indicated. Change *is* consistent with good conservation practice. The only constraint is that the changes should not alter, hide, or destroy any ‘character-defining elements’ – the features of the cabin which are identified in a Statement of Significance as giving it its heritage character.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Parks Canada, *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Ottawa, 2010, 15-17. Available at <http://www.historicplaces.ca/media/18072/81468-parks-s+g-eng-web2.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> The Blue Cabin Committee or the District of North Vancouver may consider commissioning a Statement of Significance (SOS) for the cabin.



It is important that the barge that is procured should be able to accommodate the Blue Cabin in its current form, without adversely affecting any character-defining elements. The barge should be adapted as necessary to meet the needs of the cabin, and not vice versa. In other words, the cabin should not have to be modified, other than its substructure, to fit on the barge.

### 4.3 Conservation of materials and structure

This section summarizes two reports prepared by conservator Andrew Todd: one on short-term stabilization and the other on long-term conservation. The original reports are reproduced in the Appendix.

#### Short-term stabilization

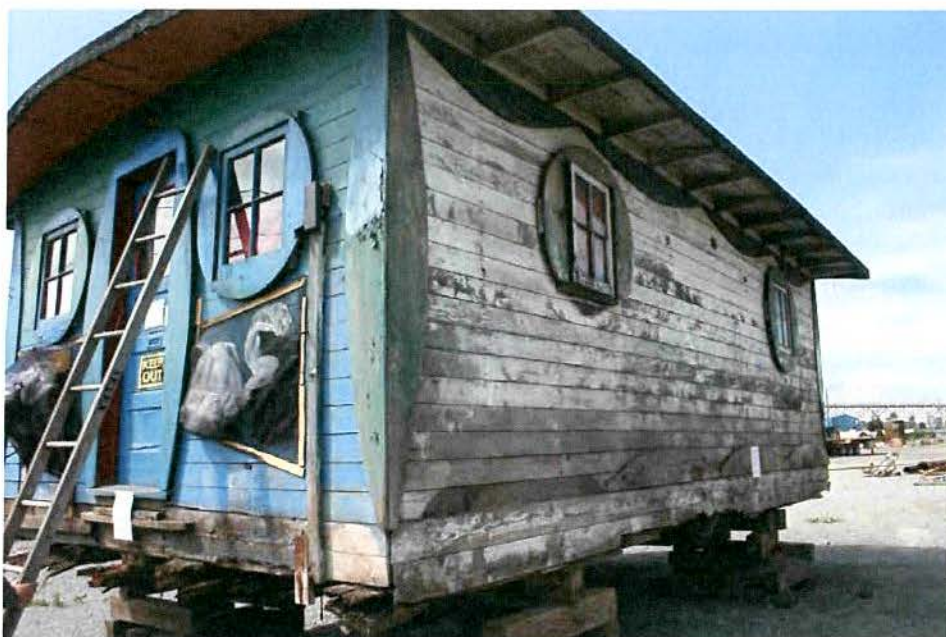
An examination of the Blue Cabin at its storage location was undertaken by Andrew Todd on Tuesday, 21 July 2015. Michael Jackson, Hal Kalman, Glenn Alteen, Barbara Cole, Marko Simcic and Esther Rausenberg were present at the time. A visit to the original Dollarton location was also made.



*The Blue Cabin on site in the outdoor storage yard, North Vancouver, July 2015 (Andrew Todd).*

The visual examinations of the cabin were made with the assistance of optical magnification recorded with digital images of the painted exterior, the unpainted under-structure, and the various surfaces of the interior. Inspections were made in the vicinity and at the actual location of the original site. Several discussions were held with other conservators to seek input for the site. In addition, on-line research was carried out and several articles were saved which relate to the project. This research is available from Todd's files as required.

These short-term recommendations began to be implemented by the Blue Cabin Committee in September 2015.



*Location of the cabin in temporary outdoor storage. (Andrew Todd)*

### *Observations*

In general, the Blue Cabin is structurally in good condition, although with deteriorated wood and flaking paint observed on the surfaces. The under-structure has seriously deteriorated beams and joists. Treatment to stabilize this area will be required. Protection of the Blue Cabin needs to be provided to prevent the effects of environmental free water/rain and moisture accumulation levels in the interior of the structure.

As there is a great deal of material related to the habitation which would be useful to preserve, a careful recording survey is recommended. In preparation for the recording, some cleaning may be required.

### *Conservation recommendations*

As noted, the Blue Cabin is in need of environmental protection. It is recommended that a scaffolding surround system be erected at the four corners and where required mid-span and that overhead framework scaffolding be provided and covered with a shrink wrap type of plastic fabric. (This would be similar in method to the covering currently provided for Christ Church Cathedral on Burrard Street.) It would also be a good idea to cover the sides for at least one-half the height of the building, leaving the bottom open for circulation of air.

The interior of the Cabin should be supplied with a small electric heater which can maintain just enough heat to keep the interior free of moisture and condensation.

For security it is suggested that consideration be given to supplementing the present secure storage site with an 8-foot-high portable fencing system around the Cabin. If installed, the fence should be kept locked to prevent entry.



## Long-term conservation

This section describes the findings and resulting recommendations based on an examination of evidence of wood and structural conditions. Reference to the structural and decorative materials and current conservation issues were made during inspection of the Blue Cabin. A further inspection is recommended to define details of these recommendations.

A review of the history of the cabin has been made with attention to information that provides evidence about the state of the wood and decorative elements in relation to weathering and deterioration.

Further inspections will be required to confirm conservation treatment.

## Conservation examination and assessment



*Detail of scalloped decoration and decorative finishing of the underside of the eaves. (Andrew Todd)*

At the conservator's visit to the site in mid-July 2015, he became familiar with the present storage site and with the previous location along the Dollarton foreshore. An examination began with visual observation of the two locations, as well as photographs. An overall microscopic inspection was conducted. Summer weather was noted. Visual examination was well illuminated. In addition to visual examination, sound testing was conducted by rapping gently on all the wood surfaces. Sharpened blade probes were also used to determine the strength of the wood surfaces and determine how deeply penetration could be made in areas where infestation could have caused weakening and tunneling of the wood. Notes were made of all findings for future reference.

Evidence of the deterioration of structural wood from fungal rot was noted. In addition, other forms of wood decay were observed, including some evidence of sawdust ('frass') piles. Environmental conditions are relevant, since the materials in question are structural and the cabin is built on them.



The examination included the following:

- Physical measurements of penetration depths in the deteriorated wood were taken by traditional blade-penetration instruments. The measurements are recorded on the conservation documentation sketches in the possession of the conservator. In summary they varied considerably from surface to interior areas of the building. Some areas are much more seriously deteriorated, with fungal decay and rot causing physical breakdown of the wood. In several areas of the structural base support timbers the wood has split open, revealing extensive brown cuboidal fungal deterioration. The specific locations will be identified after further investigation.
- The overall fungal growth was assessed internally and rot was very apparent in each of the sections. Deterioration conditions were evaluated and found to be extensive throughout.
- Penetration depths and measurements of cracks and splits in the wood were made.
- The structural condition was examined overall by visual means and by the use of 'hollow tap' sounding tests.
- Biological growths on the surface and end grain areas of the sections were noted and recorded. Specific fungal growths were noted on several end-grain areas of the sections.
- Insect and pest activity was searched for and conditions were observed to be ideal for their presence.
- Locations and specifications of findings were made.
- Conservation handling techniques were followed during examination of the cabin.

Further visual examination, assisted by magnification loupes and a strong flashlight, needs to be carried out. A battery-powered moisture meter should be used to record moisture content of the wood. Various probes and wood penetrating instruments are recommended to further assess conditions and determine penetration depths. Additional digital photographs of conditions in various areas of the cabin need to be made with details for the records.

The roof should be examined for its weatherproof capacity, and repairs made as needed with standard roofing sealer material.



*Areas of structural deterioration in the support beams under the cabin. (Andrew Todd)*

A structural engineer should examine the cabin in light of its present condition and proposed future use, to estimate its structural capacity and determine whether any structural reinforcement is required. Reinforcement may require the addition or replacement of components, to provide new structural support systems and stabilize sections of the cabin. In this event, new wood may be required as part of the treatment for both structural and decorative components. If any changes or additions are required, the design for reinforcement should specify the least amount of disturbance that is feasible – i.e., what is called 'minimal intervention'.

### *Infestation by pests*

During the examination to discover the condition of the wood, the possibility of insect infestation, particularly by carpenter ants and possibly by termites, was noted. Excrement markings of other pests were not noticed. The possibility that rats had entered the cabin was considered and observations were made to discover any signs of this. None were noted.

Sample collection of deterioration factors, particularly of frass, should be made and identified. The infestation by termites is considered a slow-moving, slow-breeding, long-term threat of damage to structural beams in wood-frame buildings such as this.





*Detail of brown cuboidal fungal deterioration, frass, and small flight holes of insects, possibly furniture beetle or carpenter ant. (Andrew Todd)*

Subterranean termites, which live in colonies in damp or moist soil in the vicinity of wooden structures, travel to wooden members, where they grow and multiply slowly. Because they remain within the wooden members, they are difficult to observe. As a result, an infestation can only be detected by signs of frass and movement trails. Changes in weather conditions can create noticeable activity. Because these insect infestations are difficult to observe, their exact location can be hard to determine. This problem leads to difficulty in exterminating their presence.

### ***Treatment plan***

The following are initial recommendations for treatment. Based on a further examination and an assessment of the future plans for the cabin, it is recommended that a more detailed conservation treatment plan be developed to consolidate and treat the materials and structure. In addition to remediating present issues, it will help to prevent future damage.

### **Pest prevention**

Pest prevention strategies are suggested. It is recommended that a treatment of Tim-bor be carried out for protection from insects. Tim-bor is a diffusible pesticide with very low toxic effects, especially for humans and animals. Chemically, Tim-bor is 'trisodium octaborate tetrahydrate'. This treatment will provide initial stabilization of sections of the cabin and will slow the process of deterioration.

### **Structural members: large support timbers**

While removal of the cabin from storage to its initial destination is underway, a complete dry cleaning treatment of the underside of the structure should be undertaken. After dry cleaning, a low-pressure power washing spray to the whole underside of the cabin should be carried out. Washing with brushes and soap should be done at the same time, followed by a spray rinse.

While still damp from the wash and rinse, an application of Tim-bor (10-15% solution) should be sprayed on all of the underside wooden structure, using hand-powered garden sprayers. This borate-based



treatment will provide eradication of any insect infestation and provide prevention and spread of fungal rot. Further eradication steps may need to be taken with follow-up borate treatments for prevention and eradication of any wood-boring insects. The penetration of borate treatments can be assisted by mixing the solution with propylene glycol.<sup>19</sup>

The insertion of boron copper fused rods is also proposed. A number of products are available on the market, including Impel Rods and Cobra Rods. Both these products require an operation to drill into the wood with a ½-inch bit, and then insertion of a 2-inch or 4-inch rod and covering the opening with a wooden plug or a manufactured plastic cover, which can be removed for re-application. The fused rods slowly disperse their toxic contents upon the rise of moisture content in the wood. Since moisture is present in our environment; this method is considered a very effective preventive treatment and is recommended for the Blue Cabin.

### **Exterior finishes**

The protection treatment proposed involves first overall dry cleaning of the exterior structural members and the exposed interior ceiling beams, followed by the application of a 10-15% solution of Tim-bor by hand-spray application. The exposed wood should be cleaned and stabilized, followed by a treatment to consolidate the flaking layers of paint.

The rough, whitewashed finish on one exterior wall should be consolidated with a spray adhesive application and then covered with a clear coating of a custom water repellent. Other painted areas of the exterior should be cleaned and consolidated with follow-up in-painting to seal exposed wood surfaces.

### **Interior finishes**

Cleaning the surfaces, followed by stabilization of flaking paint, should be undertaken. It is necessary to be able to consider past events in the preservation of the building with new treatments in order to be sure that future problems are not being created. The results of investigations reveal that there are areas of the cabin that exhibit signs of normal wear from use. Care should be taken to preserve signs of this use and wear (it is called 'patina'), and not to make the treated finishes look new.

Some additional research needs to be carried out to confirm the extent of treatment, the best time to conduct the treatment, and the extent and length of time for treatment. This would include detailed planning of the work to provide maximum benefit and least intervention. Based on further examination, a more detailed treatment plan can be provided.

### **Maintenance**

A plan should be developed for on-going annual inspection of and long-term maintenance to the exterior finishes and structural systems. Conservation housekeeping to the interior should be maintained. Both should follow best practices as outlined in the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> The use of fumigation is not permitted under Canadian law, given the danger of residual poisoning of visitors to the cabin.

<sup>20</sup> See reference on Page 31.

## 4.4 Interpretation

Ongoing public interpretation of the history of the Blue Cabin should be an important component of the project and the ongoing operation of the cabin. 'Interpretation' is museum-talk for 'telling stories' – for communicating the history and associations of the place to visitors and users in an interesting, engaging manner.

The interpretation should address some (or all) of the following themes:

- The building
  - The architecture of the cabin
  - The cabin as representative of foreshore squats in its scale and (early) siting
  - Rare and unique features of the design, and their possible Scandinavian connections
  - The story of the purported builder
  - Cabin-building and woodcraft
- The history
  - A representative squatter's dwelling along the Burrard Inlet foreshore
  - The cabin's distinction for being the last survivor of this type
  - The early history of the Coal Harbour and Dollarton sites
  - Associations with the Tsleil-Waututh Nation
  - Events of the recent past
  - Moving the cabin: from Coal Harbour to Dollarton, to its present site, to its destinations
- The inhabitants
  - The reported original role of the cabin as the home (presumably a squat) of a Vancouver immigrant craftsman
  - Its more recent role as the long-time residence of distinguished experimental artists Al Neil and Carole Itter
- The arts
  - The role of the cabin as a long-time place for the arts, inhabited and visited by artists
  - A non-traditional setting for cultural production
  - Experimental music, visual arts, and literature in BC since the 1960s
- Environmental sustainability
  - Demonstration of good environmental practices, such as zero waste, rainwater retrieval, solar collector panels
  - 'Living off the grid'
- Interactions with mainstream society
  - Squats and the need for affordable housing
  - Using and inhabiting found spaces
  - The small-house movement
  - The importance of waterways for our resource-based economies
  - The appeal to save the cabin and the community's response

The interpretation can rely on a combination of media, predominantly digital, and perhaps including some of the following:

- Text
  - Panels or other devices
- Photographs
  - Historical photos, photos of Neil and Itter, etc.
- Sound
  - e.g., Al Neil playing the piano; sounds of the water and the wind
- Neil's and Itter's writings and visual art
- Video
- Film
  - E.g., Films by David Ritter and Krista Lomax
- Assemblages from the Dollarton site, either relocated or recreated
- Guided tours

We recommend that a detailed Interpretation Plan be prepared to address these and related issues. The interpretation should be selective. It cannot tell all the stories, but rather should relate most strongly to the final use and appearance of the cabin. The interpretation should be planned so that it complements, and does not compete with, the use the cabin.



## 5. Implementation

### 5.1 Management and finances

#### General considerations

We recommend that the Blue Cabin Committee identify an existing not-for-profit entity to take on responsibility for the ongoing conservation and operation of the Blue Cabin, the artist residency program, and fundraising. Ideally the entity should already have obtained charitable-donation status. It is inadvisable that a group of unincorporated volunteer stewards should commit to much beyond the immediate tasks of determining the location and planning the details of the cabin's future.

Alternatively, a new not-for-profit society can be formed. This would be a second choice only, because incorporation and the acquisition of charitable status take time, thereby delaying the society's ability to procure grants and fundraise.

Ongoing management will be by the society's Board of Directors. It is likely that the core members of the Blue Cabin Committee will become directors of the society. Since the directors remain volunteers, there will be a need to appoint a manager and possibly also support staff. While these may begin as volunteers, in time they will be paid staff.

#### Budget

The Board will prepare a detailed budget. The following is the framework for a budget. It names the principal categories, but does not provide amounts.

##### **Revenues**

Core funding (if secured)  
Ongoing fundraising  
Earned revenues (art sales, publication rights, and other public-directed activities)

##### **Expenses**

###### *Capital Costs*

Acquisition of a barge  
Conservation of the Blue Cabin  
Upgrades to the Blue Cabin  
Construction of the new residential cabin

###### *Operating Costs*

Moorage and/or water-lot rental  
Utilities  
Maintenance and ongoing conservation  
Staff salaries and benefits  
Award to the artist in residence (if any)  
Expenses of the artist in residence  
Promotion and marketing

## 5.2 Implementation checklist

The following is a summary of the steps required the plan for the conservation and re-use of the Blue Cabin:

1. The Blue Cabin Committee formally approves this report, or else revises it and approves a revised version.
2. The short-term conservation work is continued and completed.
3. Fundraising continues on an ongoing basis.
4. The Blue Cabin Committee identifies or forms a not-for-profit society to take responsibility for the project, and that society succeeds the Committee.
5. If an existing society, members of the Committee are appointed to the Board of Directors.
6. If a new society, the Committee appoints the initial Board of Directors, which approves bylaws and incorporates with the objective of achieving charitable status from CRA.
7. A structural engineer examines the cabin to determine the possible need for structural upgrades.
8. A conservator undertakes a detailed inspection of the materials and structure.
9. The Board prepares a comprehensive Conservation Plan that addresses in detail heritage conservation, materials conservation, structural upgrading, and architectural interventions, and prepares cost estimates for the work.
10. The Board plans and sets up the artist residency program.
11. The Board prepares a Business Plan. This will include plans for staffing, operation, and fundraising.
12. A barge is secured for the long term.
13. Moorage is secured.
14. The Board prepares an Interpretation Plan.
15. The cabin is moved to the barge.
16. The programs of facility upgrades, long-term conservation, and interpretation begin. These should be done with the assistance of a conservation architect, conservator, interpretive planner, and/or other heritage professional.
17. The new residential cabin is designed and built (unless it is deferred pending establishment of the residency and secure funding).

18. The Board selects the first artist in residence.

19. The residency program begins.

20. Plans are made for future moorage sites.

## VANCOUVER BIENNALE

### RESIDENCY ARTIST AT DUNBAR COMMUNITY CENTRE



## SUMEDH RAJENDRAN

*The Vancouver area has numerous artist residency programs. (Vancouver Biennale)*



## 6. Sources

### 6.1 People

#### Blue Cabin Committee

Glenn Alteen, Project lead; Programming Director, grunt gallery  
Esther Rausenberg, Co-artistic Director, Creative Cultural Collaborations Society  
Barbara Cole, Executive Director, Other Sights for Artists' Projects

#### Consultant team

##### *Authors of the present report*

Harold Kalman, primary consultant  
Andrew Todd, Andrew Todd Conservators Ltd., sub-consultant

##### *Consulted or retained separately by the Blue Cabin Committee*

Marko Simcic, Architect  
Michael Jackson, Project manager  
Dan Pon, grunt gallery

#### People consulted

##### *By Harold Kalman*

Anne Bancroft-Jones, Vice President, First Nations Relations and Special Programs, Polygon Homes  
Colin Browne, Poet and filmmaker  
Carole Itter, Artist  
Nancy Kirkpatrick, Director, North Shore Museum and Archives  
Melanie O'Brian, Director, Audain Gallery, SFU  
Gary Penway, Director of Community Services, City of North Vancouver  
Poul Erik Rasmussen, Scandinavian Cultural Society, Burnaby, BC  
Reid Shier, Director and Curator, Presentation House Gallery  
Craig Sims, Heritage Building Consultant, Kingston, Ontario  
Andy Sylvester, Director, Equinox Gallery  
Carolyn Thauberger, Scandinavian Cultural Society, Burnaby, BC  
Jørgen Walle Jensen, Vancouver

##### *By the Blue Cabin Committee*

##### **Port Metro Vancouver and other foreshore interests**

Christine Banham, North Shore Waterfront Liaison Committee  
Jillian Cooke, North Shore Waterfront Liaison Committee; Canexus Corporation, Quality Engineer  
Christine Eriksen, Port Metro Vancouver  
Naomi Horsford, Port Metro Vancouver  
Ian MacMurdo, Chair, North Shore Waterfront Liaison Committee  
Allan Neilson, Port Metro Vancouver  
Frances Tang-Graham, Port Metro Vancouver

**Development**

Michael Audain, Chairman, Polygon Homes  
Neil Chrystal, President and Chief Executive Officer, Polygon Homes  
Darren Cranston, Vice President Construction, Polygon Construction Management Ltd.  
Cynthia Melosky, Vice President Development, Polygon Cates Landing Ltd  
Rene Rose, Senior Vice President Development, Polygon Cates Landing Ltd.  
Peter Roskell, Senior Vice President Construction, Polygon Construction Management Ltd

**Municipal Government**

North Vancouver Mayor and Council  
Mayor Richard Walton, District of North Vancouver  
Lisa Muri, North Vancouver District Council  
Jim Hanson, North Vancouver District Council  
Heather Deal, Councillor, City of Vancouver (COV)  
Geoff Meggs, Councillor, COV  
Doug Allan, Lands Office  
John Rice, North Vancouver Recreation and Culture Commission  
Lori Phillips, North Vancouver Recreation and Culture Commission  
Rich Newirth, COV Cultural Services  
Diana Leung, COV Cultural Services  
Bryan Newson, COV Public Art Program  
Jil Weaving, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation  
Alison Sales, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation  
Catherine Evans, Park Commissioner, COV  
Members of the Vancouver Public Art Committee

**Cultural Organizations**

Daina Augaitis, Chief Curator/Associate Director, Vancouver Art Gallery (VAG)  
Kathleen Bartels, Director, VAG  
Shaun Dacey, Curator of Learning and Public Programs, Contemporary Art Gallery (CAG)  
Paul Larocque, Associate Director, VAG  
Nancy Kirkpatrick, Director, North Vancouver Museum & Archives  
Nigel Prince, Director, CAG  
Reid Shier, Director, Presentation House Gallery  
Scott Watson, Director, Helen and Morris Belkin Gallery  
Alma Lee, Trustee, Granville Island Trust

**Project Management**

Michael Jackson, volunteer project manager  
Pietro Widmer, VP, Project Services, PM Volunteers

**Heritage**

Deborah Myers, Department of Canadian Heritage  
Peter Miller, North Shore Preservation Society  
John Atkin, historian  
Bruce Macdonald, historian

**Individuals**

Luke Blackstone, artist  
Thomas Benjamin Carruthers, artist/architect  
David Duckworth, Camp Jubilee, Indian Arm  
Christine Elsey, educator  
Penny Gurstein, Professor and Director, School of Community & Regional Planning and Centre for Human Settlements, UBC  
Bill Jeffries, curator  
Robert Kleyn, artist/architect  
Jo Ledingham, supporter  
Eric Pawlett, Sunshine Coast  
Tom Sandborn, writer, Vancouver Sun

**Movers**

Bob Vickers, Zebiak Houseraising  
Peter Christensen, Supreme Structural Transport Ltd. (the cabin's movers)  
Adam Knipfel, Nickel Brothers  
Ben Gourlay and Gordon Macdonald, Macdonald & Lawrence Timber Framing Ltd.  
Dick Boulter, Bear Creek Movers

**Fundraising and support**

Gail Huzel  
The Freybes  
Garry Neill Kennedy  
Cathy Busby  
Lindsay Ross  
Jeanette Langmann  
Robert Kardosh  
Craig Sibley

## 6.2 Published and unpublished sources

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Andrew Todd Conservators Ltd., 'The Blue Cabin: Conservation Inspection Report; Blue Cabin Preservation Committee,' Bowen Island, 16 August 2015

'Tsleil-Waututh Nation: a quick rewind of Colonial history,' 2004, available at [http://volcano.resist.ca/2004/tsleil\\_waututh\\_nation.html](http://volcano.resist.ca/2004/tsleil_waututh_nation.html)

'Tsleil-Waututh: People of the Inlet,' updated 2015, available at <http://www.twnation.ca/>

Photographs and documentation in the collection of Al Neil and Carole Itter, and in the collection of the grunt gallery

### 6.3 Promotion by the Blue Cabin Committee

Facebook page, over 730 likes (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Al-Caroles-Cabin/641796659281951?fref=ts>)

The Globe and Mail, Marsha Lederman, June 22, 2015. "Saved from demolition, historic Vancouver cabin needs a new home".

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/saved-from-demolition-historic-vancouver-cabin-needs-a-new-home/article25069337/>

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(Blog) Theresa Kishkan, Jan 21, 2015

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North Shore News, Jane Seyd, Jan 23, 2015

<http://www.nsnews.com/news/north-vancouver-waterfront-cabin-ordered-removed-1.1741242>

The Vancouver Sun, Tom Sandborn, Jan 24, 2015

<http://www.vancouversun.com/mobile/entertainment/top-stories/history+Vancouver+squats/10755812/story.html>

<http://www.vancouversun.com/entertainment/Artists+fight+preserve+historic+year+North+Vancouver+cabin/10755706/story.html>

(Blog) Daniel Francis, Reading the National Narrative, Jan 24, 2015

<http://www.danielfrancis.ca/blog/history-squatting>

(Blog) Scamcouver, Jan 31, 2015

<https://scamcouver.wordpress.com/2015/01/>

North Shore News, Letter to the Editor, Feb 4, 2015

<http://www.nsnews.com/opinion/letters/letter-move-squatter-s-shack-to-cates-park-1.1752259>

## 7. Appendixes

Andrew Todd Conservators Ltd., 'The Blue Cabin: Conservation Inspection Report,' August 16, 2015.

Andrew Todd Conservators Ltd., 'Conservation Recommendations to Stabilize and Secure The Blue Cabin,' November 30, 2015.

Nancy Kirkpatrick, 'Report on Foreshore Cabin adjacent to Future Polygon Development and Cates Park,' November 16, 2014. Reproduced with the permission of the author.





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## ***The Blue Cabin***

### **Conservation Inspection Report; Blue Cabin Preservation Committee**

**16 August 2015**

Andrew Todd Conservators Ltd.

# Conservation Inspection Report

Date of Report: 16 August 2015

Date of Examination: 21 July 2015

Inspection by: Andrew Todd

## **Conservation Inspection Report**; Blue Cabin Preservation Committee.

An examination of the Blue Cabin formerly the recreational/creative retreat of Al Neil and Carole Itter was undertaken by Andrew Todd on Tuesday, 21 July 2015 with Michael Jackson, Hal Kalman, Glenn Alteen, Barbara Cole, Marko Simcic and Esther Rausenberg. The visual examinations were made with the assistance of optical magnification recorded with digital images of the painted exterior, the unpainted under-structure and the various surfaces of the interior. Inspections were made in the vicinity and at the actual location of the original site and further inspections will be required to confirm conservation treatment.

### **Observations**

In general, the Blue Cabin is structurally in good condition with deteriorated wood and flaking paint observed on surfaces. The under-structure has seriously deteriorated beams and joists from the original shoreline site. Treatment to stabilize this area will be required. Protection of the Blue Cabin needs to be provided to prevent the effects of environmental free water/rain and moisture accumulation levels in the interior of the structure.

### **Site Recommendations**

In preparation for recording the site some cleaning may be required. As there is a great deal of material related to the habitation which would be useful to preserve, a careful recording survey is recommended.

### **Conservation Recommendations**

As noted, the Blue Cabin is in need of environmental protection. It is recommended that a scaffolding surround system be erected at the four corners and where required mid-span and that an overhead framework scaffolding be provided and covered with a shrink wrap type of plastic fabric. (Similar to the covering presently provided for Christ Church Cathedral on Burrard St.) It would also be a good idea to cover the sides for at least ½ the height of the building, leaving the bottom open for circulation of air. The interior of the Cabin should be supplied with a small electric heater which can maintain just enough minimum heat to keep the interior free of moisture and condensation.

For security it is recommended an 8' high portable fencing system be provided around the Cabin. The fence should be kept locked to prevent entry.

**Conservation Research**

Several discussions were held with other conservators to seek input for the site. In addition, on-line research was carried out and several articles were saved which relate to the project. This research is available from the file as required.

Signed:  Andrew Todd

16 August 2015





***Andrew Todd Conservators Ltd.***

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30 November 2015

## **Conservation Recommendations to Stabilize and Secure**

### ***The Blue Cabin***

#### **Introduction**

This conservation report describes the findings and resulting recommendations based on examination of evidence of wood and structural conditions. Reference to the structural and decorative materials of the building and the current conservation issues were made during inspection of the Blue Cabin. A further inspection is recommended to define details of these recommendations.



The Blue Cabin on site in outdoor storage yard, North Vancouver, July 2015

## Background

The Blue Cabin was constructed in the 1930's as a cabin retreat.

The history of the cabin circles around the personalities of Al Neil and Carole Itter and their cultural influences. Al Neil was initially involved in the design and development of the cabin as a retreat and later it was further decorated and maintained with input and direction from Carole Itter. Their vision for a weekend retreat included a cooperative seaside atmosphere with other cabins in the area of the Dollarton Flats at Burrard Inlet.

There are many literary references to the area by various authors, including Malcom Lowery in his famous book "Under the Volcano", which was possibly at least partially written at one of the cabins at the site.

Other historic references to the cabin and the area have been researched and are becoming available in support of the preservation of the cabin.



Location of the cabin in temporary outdoor storage.

## Conservation Examination and Assessment



In the early days of July 2015, conservator Andrew Todd was contacted by the Michael Jackson, engineer responsible for management of the cabin. A meeting was held with Michael Jackson, Hal Kalman, Glenn Alteen, Barbara Cole, Marko Simcic and Esther Rausenberg.

A site visit to the cabin's original location was made and then a survey of the cabin in storage was undertaken. In addition to obvious signs of deterioration from fungal rot, other forms of wood decay were observed including some evidence of sawdust (frass) piles. Summer weather conditions were noted and a series of days were recorded as quite warm for the usual weather in our region. This first link with the environmental conditions still remains relevant since the materials in question are structural and the cabin is built on them.



Detail of scalloped decoration and decorative finishing of the underside of the eaves.

The conservator was first able to visit the site in mid-July 2015 and at that time became familiar with the site and locations where evidence of deterioration of structural wood was noted. An examination began with visual observation of the actual original location, as well as photographs, overall microscopic inspection of the location was conducted. Visual examination was well illuminated in the area. In addition to visual examination, sound testing was conducted by rapping gently on all the wood surfaces. Sharpened blade probes were also used to determine the strength of the wood surfaces and determine how deeply penetration could be made in areas where infestation could have caused weakening and tunneling of the wood. Notes were made of all findings for future reference.

- Physical measurements of penetration depths in the deteriorated wood, taken by traditional blade penetration instruments. These measurements are recorded on the conservation documentation sketches but in summary they varied considerably from surface to interior areas of the building. Some areas are much more seriously deteriorated with fungal decay and rot causing physical breakdown of the wood. In several areas of the structural base support timbers the wood has split open revealing extensive brown cuboidal fungal deterioration.



- The overall fungal growth was assessed internally and rot was very apparent in each of the sections and deterioration conditions were evaluated and found to be extensive throughout.
- Penetration depths and measurements of cracks and splits in the wood were made.



Areas of structural deterioration in support beams under the cabin.

- The structural condition was examined overall, by visual means and by use of “hollow tap” sounding tests.
- Biological growths on the surface and end grain areas of the sections were noted and recorded. Specific fungal growths were noted on several end grain areas of the sections.
- Insect and pest activity was searched for and conditions were observed to be ideal for their presence.
- Pest prevention strategies are suggested here and it is recommended that a Tim-bor treatment process be carried out for protection. Tim-bor is a diffusible pesticide with very low toxic effects especially for humans and animals. Chemically, Tim-bor is “trisodium octoborate tetrahydrate”.
- Locations and specifications of findings were made for the cabin.
- Conservation handling techniques were followed during examination of the cabin.

### **Research Cultural**

A review of the history of the cabin has been made with attention to information that describes the state of the wood and decorative elements in relation to weathering and deterioration.

### **Further Examination Instruments and Equipment**

Further visual examination, assisted by magnification loupes and a strong flashlight needs to be carried out. A battery powered moisture meter should be used to record moisture content of the wood. Various probes and wood penetrating instruments are recommended to further assess conditions and determine penetration depths. Additional digital photographs of conditions in various areas of the cabin need to be made with details for the records.

### **Treatment Project Plan**

Based on a further examination, and an assessment of the plans for the cabin, it is recommended that a conservation treatment plan be developed to consolidate and treat the cabin. Degrees of restoration include initial stabilizing of the sections of the cabin to slow the process of deterioration, as mentioned with an application of Tim-bor. The cleaning and stabilizing the exposed wood would be the next step followed by a treatment to consolidate the flaking layers of paint. Providing conservation and restoration treatment of the wood would involve consolidation and the addition of replacement parts to give new structural support systems as may be required to stabilize sections of the cabin. New wood may be required as part of the treatment for both structural and decorative pieces of the cabin.



Detail of brown cuboidal fungal deterioration, frass& small flight holes of insects, possibly furniture beetle or carpenter ant.

During the examination to discover the condition of the wood, the possibility of insect infestation by particularly carpenter ants and possibly termites was noted. The excrement markings of other pests were not noticed during the exam. The possibility that rats had entered the cabin was considered and observations were made to discover any signs and none were noted.



### **Collection and Analysis of Samples**

Sample collection of deterioration factors, particularly of frass should be made and identified. The infestation by termites is considered a slow-moving, slow-breeding, long term threat of damage to structural beams in wooden frame buildings.

### **Characteristics of Infestation by Insects**

The Subterranean Termites which live in damp or moist soil in the vicinity of wooden structures live in colonies and travel to wooden member where they grow and multiply slowly. Because they remain in the wooden members they are difficult to observe. As a result, an infestation can only be detected by signs of frass and movement trails. Changes in weather conditions can create noticeable activity. Because these insect infestations are difficult to observe, the exact location can be hard to determine. This problem leads to the difficulty of exterminating their presence.

### **Consideration of Treatments**

#### **Overall Structural Treatment; (The large support timbers):**

Prior to the replacement of the support timbers, while removal is underway, a complete dry cleaning treatment of the underside of the structure should be undertaken. After dry cleaning a low-pressure power washing spray to the whole underside of the cabin should be carried out. Then washing with brushes and soap should be carried out at the same time followed by a spray rinse. While still damp from the wash and rinse an application of Tim-Bor (15% solution) should be sprayed on all of the underside wooden structure using hand powered garden sprayers. This borate based treatment will provide eradication of any insect infestation and provide prevention and spread of fungal rot. Further eradication steps may need to be taken with follow-up borate treatments for prevention and eradication of any wood-boring insects. Borate treatments can be assisted in penetration by mixing the solution with propylene glycol.

The insertion of boron copper fused rods is also proposed. There are a number of products on the market, including Impel Rods and Cobra Rods. Both of these products require an operation to drill into the wood with a ½ inch bit and then insert a 2" or 4" rod and cover the opening with a wooden plug or a manufactured plastic cover which can be removed for re-application. The fused rods then slowly disperse their toxic contents upon the rise of moisture content in the wood. Since moisture is present in our environment; this method is considered a very effective preventive treatment. It is recommended for the Blue Cabin.

The rooftop of the building should be examined for weatherproof qualities and repairs made with standard roofing sealer material.

### **Outside Finishes**

The old, rough unpainted exterior wall should be consolidated with a spray adhesive application and then covered with a clear coating of a custom water repellent. Other painted areas of the exterior should be cleaned and consolidated with follow-up inpainting to seal exposed wood surfaces.



### **Summary of Conservation Interior Finishes**

Cleaning of surfaces followed by stabilization of flaking paint should be undertaken. It is necessary to be able to consider past events in the preservation of the building with new treatments in order to be sure that future problems are not being created here. The results of investigations reveal that there are areas of the cabin that exhibit signs of normal wear from use. Care should be taken to preserve signs of this original use.

### **Recommendations and Long-term Maintenance**

A protection treatment is proposed and involves first overall dry cleaning of the exterior structural members and the exposed interior ceiling and beams followed by the application of 10% solution of Tim-bor by hand- spray application. Certainly the use of fumigation is not permitted under Canadian law given the danger of residual poisoning of visiting guests to the cabin. The other options require some structural additions to the cabin and the least amount of disturbance and the safest treatment is recommended. Some additional research to the requirements of the cabin needs to be carried out to confirm the extent of treatment, best time to conduct the treatment, the extent and length of time for treatment. This proposal would include detailed planning of the work to provide maximum benefit and least intervention. Based on the examination, a further, detailed treatment plan can be provided upon request.

On-going annual maintenance to the exterior finishes and structural systems should be identified and planned. The interior conservation housekeeping can be maintained with reference to the steps outlined throughout the “Standards and Guidelines for Conservation of Historic Places in Canada”.

As principal of Andrew Todd Conservators Ltd., I am prepared to act as consultant for this project and lead the conservation treatment program and work in cooperation with project team.

### **Respectfully submitted:**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Andrew Todd 30 November 2015



**REPORT ON FORESHORE CABIN ADJACENT TO FUTURE  
POLYGON DEVELOPMENT AND CATES PARK**

Nancy Kirkpatrick, Director, NVMA

**BACKGROUND**

Pursuant to a recommendation in a staff memo ("Foreshore Cabin Adjacent to Future Polygon Development and Cates Park, October 27, 2014, by Mathew Schofield), on October 30, 2014 I was asked to visit the site of the cabin and provide recommendations with respect to preservation, documentation and/or retention of the cabin and surrounding artwork. I subsequently spoke with Mathew Schofield of DNV (Oct 31); spoke with the cabin's co-resident, artist Carole Itter, visited the site and took photographs (November 1); wrote a brief e-mail with preliminary findings (November 4); spoke with Jennifer Paton of DNV and Reid Shier, Director of Presentation House Gallery (November 5); corresponded by e-mail with Reid Shier and Glenn Alteen, Director of Vancouver's Grunt Gallery (November 6 and 7) who is authorized by the cabin's co-residents, artists Carole Itter and Al Neil, to speak about the cabin on their behalf. On November 8, Glenn Alteen met with the artists and posed questions I had asked about the cabin, its contents and the assemblage sculptures beside it. On November 11, I spoke about the cabin with John Rice of the Recreation and Arts Commission.

Follow-up e-mails with District staff (November 12 and 13) informed me that Port Metro Vancouver had told the District they would hold off on demolition of the cabin until the District had an opportunity to assess the building and determine, by the end of November, if they had an interest in it. I was also informed that Polygon is anxious because they are getting pushed by Port Metro to demolish or otherwise dispose of the building as part of a larger demolition project on the foreshore lands.

On November 14, I met with Carole Itter and Glenn Alteen to review the matter and to discuss a possible future option for the cabin, i.e. removing its entrance façade and adjacent assemblage elements for use as a future exhibit in the New Museum. Mr. Neil could not meet with us because he is recuperating from back surgery.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- Recent Photographs of the Cabin
- Selected Bibliography



## HISTORY OF THE CABIN

Al Neil has resided in the cabin, on and off, since 1966. Carole Itter joined him as a co-resident thirteen years later. What I know about the structure comes from conversations with Ms. Itter and from a 2-page history written by Al Neil in August 1996.



McKenzie Barge site with blue foreshore cabin on the right.

Vince Mason, one of the oldest workers at McKenzie Barge & Derrick, told Al Neil that the cabin was built by a Scandinavian craftsman in the 1930s and was originally moored on a barge in Coal Harbour. When its builder got a job at McKenzie Barge he had the cabin towed to its present location and lifted by a derrick onto pilings. The cabin became part of a small community of beach dwellers who worked at McKenzie Barge.



In September 1966, while Al Neil was acting as a fill-in light keeper at Point Atkinson, he spoke with Ralph McKenzie about the possibility of moving into then-vacant cabin. Mr. Mackenzie agreed, and provided an electrical supply to the cabin which, I think, involved running extensions from the main McKenzie site. To my knowledge, there is no running water in the cabin.

According to Neil, Bob and Brian McKenzie always considered him a beach watchman because the cabin was the only thing standing between the beach and their Marine Ways.

By the late 1970s, Cates Park was in existence and all that remained at the end of the beach adjacent to the McKenzie Barge site were two squatter shacks (dwellings of two McKenzie workers that had escaped the general razing of shacks in the later 1950s) and an illegally-beached freighter, the *Island Prince*, which was demolished in 1978.

According to Neil, after the freighter was demolished the Ports Police “zeroed in on the two squatters’ shacks on the beach.” By this time, he says, the shacks had been occupied by a series of residents including “workers from North Van, temporarily



unemployed and latterly, itinerant hippies.” After the Ports Police evicted the squatters and demolished the shacks, “they spotted my cabin which always looked nice”. Then they handed him an eviction notice and “told [him] with grins on their faces to get out within a week and they just walked away.” Later, Bob McKenzie looked at the eviction notice, called the Port and arranged for the cabin to be spared. Said Neil, “he liked having me on the beach as an extra watchman.” Today, several decades later, the cabin remains on the beach where it was first deposited some eighty years ago<sup>1</sup>.

In 2005, music critic Alexander Varty writing in the *Georgia Straight* described a visit to Neil’s cabin:

After taking a hidden woodland trail to his rough cabin—which, perched on top of a small, permanently beached barge, seemed as much houseboat as house—we drank tea and discussed art and music to the accompaniment of his cat, making its delicate way across the keys of a battered upright piano. Slanting through dusty windows, the sun lit up Neil’s flotsam assemblages just as surely as the pianist’s wayward yet erudite conversation illuminated the idea that it’s possible to build a life around constant exploration. For that lesson, I’ll always be thankful, as will the thousands of others who learned it under this madman, mystic, and living legend’s persistent tutelage.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT AL NEIL AND CAROLE ITTER

**Al Neil** (b. 1924) is a musician, composer, collage artist, sculptor, and writer, who is renowned on West Coast for his experimental and avant-garde works. A World War II veteran and jazz pianist, he began playing in Vancouver clubs in the late 1940s and was a central figure in the 1950s and 60s at the Cellar club where he performed both with other artists and with his own group, The Al Neil Quartet. He later introduced a wholly unique and unusual, free jazz style and released several recordings, which were re-issued in compilation formats in the 1980s and 90s.

In addition to music, Neil is known for his writing, visual art and his extensive artistic collaborations with artist Carole Itter. He is known for his multimedia performances in the 1970s and mixed-media collages from 1980s. His works have been exhibited at the Vancouver Art Gallery, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Western Front in Vancouver, and the Musee d’art Moderne in Paris. He is the subject of a 1979 film (*Al Neil: A Portrait*) by the celebrated filmmaker David Rimmer. In 2008, Al Neil received an Honorary Doctor of Letters from Emily Carr University of Art and Design. In 2014, he received the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award at the Mayor’s Arts Awards in Vancouver, which recognizes “an individual who has made significant contributions over his or her lifetime to the cultural vibrancy of the city.” For the past forty-eight years he has divided his time between Vancouver and the foreshore cabin at Dollarton.

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<sup>1</sup> Apart from its deteriorating foundation, the cabin is still in good shape with a well-constructed tongue and groove interior and a roof supported by sturdy curving rafters.





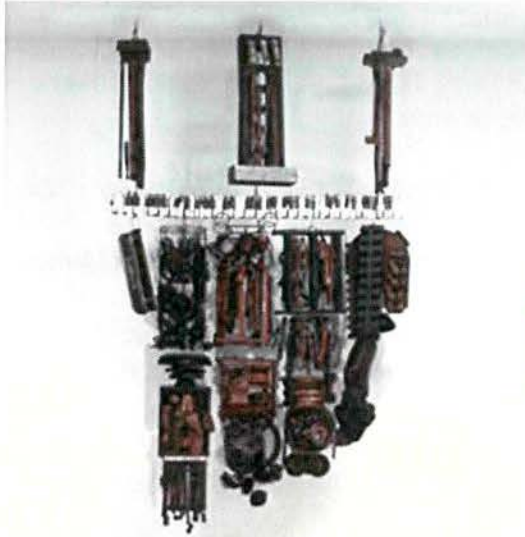
Above: Al Neil on deck of the cabin, undated (1990's?). Photo by Jim Jardine. From the website "Vancouver Art in the Sixties". (<http://alnil.vancouverartinthesixties.com/bio-cv>)

Left: "Al Neil on front deck, Dollarton, BC", 1973. From the website "Vancouver Art In the Sixties" (<http://vancouverartinthesixties.com/archive/169>)

"New York has William Burroughs, Los Angeles has Charles Bukowski and Vancouver has Al Neil." – John Armstrong, Vancouver writer and musician

**Carole Itter** (b. 1939) is a sculptor, art instructor, film maker, oral historian, and writer. She has received awards from the Canada Council for the Arts and the British Columbia Arts Council. In 1989 she received the prestigious VIVA (Vancouver Institute of Visual Arts) award. The oral history of Vancouver's Strathcona neighbourhood (*Opening Doors: In Vancouver's East End*, 1979) that she co-wrote with Daphne Marlatt was re-published in 2011 as one of the Vancouver 125 legacy books to celebrate the City's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

An experimental artist, many of Itter's artistic works involve 'found objects' and natural materials. Her opposition to consumer culture is a thread that weaves throughout her work. She has become known for large-scale installations which use re-cycled materials and objects from her surroundings to create art with emotional resonance. Works by Itter are in the collections of The Canada Council Art Bank, the Vancouver Public Library, the Vancouver Art Gallery and private collections.



Above: Photo of Carole Itter from the website "ABC Bookworld".

[http://www.abcbookworld.com/view\\_author.php?id=716](http://www.abcbookworld.com/view_author.php?id=716)



Left: A 'playable' sculpture by Carole Itter titled "Grand Piano Rattle: a Bosendorfer for Al Neil", 1984. Collection: Vancouver Art Gallery.

## HISTORY OF 'SQUATTING' ON BURRARD INLET

For much of the twentieth century, Burrard Inlet was home to squatters living in houseboats, floating shacks, cabins, and foreshore cottages on pilings. The Inlet's most famous squatter was Malcolm Lowry, who lived between 1940 and 1954 in successive shacks at Dollarton, in what is now Cates Park, very near to the location of the foreshore cabin. Those were some of Lowry's most productive years and he wrote much of his classic novel *Under the Volcano* while living in a shack at Dollarton.

Waterfront squatters' communities evolved in the Vancouver area for various reasons, including poverty and unemployment, adjacency to work places, rebellion against social conventions and the yearning for an unfettered way of life in harmony with nature. According to Scott Watson, "Squatting in the intertidal zone is as old as Vancouver and is an important part of the history of the city. ... Intertidal squats have been established and last largely due to the ambiguity of jurisdiction over the intertidal area."

The earliest squatter settlements in the region date back to 1860 when sailors jumped ship in Vancouver harbour and settled in what later became Stanley Park. Historian Daniel Francis says, according to one source, there were 364 shacks along the Vancouver foreshore in 1894. At their height in the 1930s and 40s, over a thousand people lived in squatter communities on the Inlet. According to Francis, in 1949 there were 866 shacks along the foreshore, reflecting the housing shortage in the city. By the late 1950s, most of those communities had been destroyed.

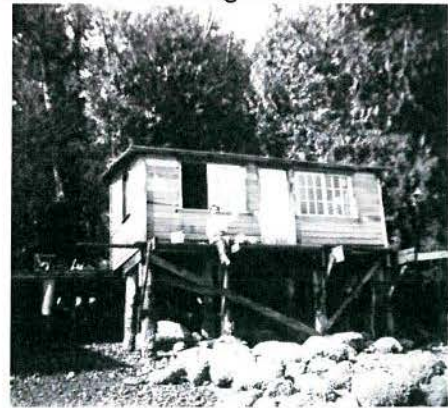




*Left:* Floating shacks and houses in Coal Harbour, across from Stanley Park, 1925. Photo from City of Vancouver Archives (AM54-S4-: Str N11). Al Neil's cabin was said to have been built here.

Vestiges of the squatter colony in Stanley Park remained until 1958 when the last resident died. Squatters also lived on Deadman's Island (where 150 squatters lived in 1909), and at Coal Harbour (where a squatter community was dubbed "Shaughnessy Heights" for its relatively luxurious accommodations). Conditions were much different on the north and south shores of False Creek (where squatters were issued their final eviction notices in 1955) and beneath the Burrard Bridge on the foreshore of the Kitsilano Reserve (where some 300 people were living in 1936).

A sizeable squatter community (sometimes called "Lazy Bay") evolved on the foreshore near Roche Point in North Vancouver. It was first inhabited by fishermen and employees of the Dollar Mill and McKenzie Barge. Later, some of the cabins served as summer cabins for Vancouver families. Malcolm Lowry and his wife Margerie lived there for fourteen years. Other writers, including Earle Birney, Dorothy Livesay, and Al Purdy, were drawn to live or visit for a while in the ramshackle beach homes at Dollarton. At its peak, writes Dan Francis, there were about 90 or more shacks there. In the late 1950s, the residents were evicted, the shacks were bulldozed, and the area became Cates Park.



*Right:* Dorothy Burt a Malcom Lowry's shack, c. 1954  
Photo courtesy Deep Cove Heritage Society

In an on-line posting from 2012, District Mayor Richard Walton talked about being a young UBC English Literature student and listening to Professor and poet Earle Birney talk about the Dollarton shacks being flattened by District bulldozers. According to Walton, Birney prefaced these words in an edition of Malcolm Lowry's collected poems:

The bright crazy little shack is gone; all the sloppy ramshackle honest pile houses where fishermen lived and kingfishers visited are bulldozed into limbo, along with the wild cherries and 'the forest path to the spring'. Now there is an empty beach and beside it a park with picnic tables and tarmac access; the sea air stinks with car exhaust. And the city that ignored him plans to cement a bronze plaque in his memory to the brick wall of the new civic craphouse.





Maplewood mud flats with squatter shacks, photo taken in 1973 by Bruce Stewart.  
From Presentation House Gallery website.

On the foreshore a kilometre west of Cates Park another squatter community grew up on the Maplewood mud flats 1969. Previous squatters on the muddy estuary had been forced out in 1961 when L&K Lumber purchased the property. When hippies discovered this area of the foreshore in the early 1970s, they set up tents, shacks and lean-tos and formed a community where the counter-culture flourished and artists and poets were welcomed. Sculptor Tom Burrows lived there for two years. Some of the dwellings were burned down by the District in 1972, while others lasted a few years longer. The films *Mudflats Living* (NFB, 1972) and *Living in the Mud* (Sean Malone, 1972) document that community.



The last squatter in the area, who had lived on the flats for 36 years, was allowed to stay in a home he had built from scrap lumber until 1986. This photo was taken in the year of the shack's demolition, when its 88-year old resident went into a nursing home.

Left: From a Flickr photo set:  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/canadagood/3068744135/>

Across the inlet, there were also squatter communities near Brighton Beach in Vancouver and at "Crabtown" in Burnaby, just east of the Second Narrows Bridge. Rolf Knight's book, *Along the No. 20 Line*, contains detailed descriptions of the squatter community near where he grew up at the eastern end of Commissioner Drive. People living there were cleared out in 1951, after being evicted by the National Harbours Board. Crabtown met a similar fate a few years later. It had sprung up during a housing shortage in 1912 when a group of mill employees built a few shacks on piers along the Inlet. In 1957, eviction notices were given to the 150 families living there and two years later the last members of that community had been re-located and their shacks were destroyed.

At their height, according to Sheryl Salloum, squatter communities in Vancouver were home to about 1,800 people. Like the foreshore cabin at the McKenzie site, most squatter's dwellings had no electricity, running water, sewage or garbage disposal. And none of their residents paid property taxes, a fact that irked other citizens especially during the Depression when everyone was having trouble getting by.

According to Daniel Francis, "squatters have been part of the urban scene in Vancouver for a long time. The term is often used in a pejorative sense, but as often as not squatters, despite their marginal lifestyle, have been productive members of the community, holding jobs, raising families and, in Lowry's case, writing great literature." This was also the case for Al Neil. He moved to the foreshore cabin in 1966 after his former home in Vancouver's west end burned down. As he recounted in 1996, "I'm a writer and musician and artist and this has provided my meagre livelihood." Although he lived a lifestyle similar to that of a squatter--in a cabin without running water and utilities--he never considered himself a "squatter" because he lived there with the permission of McKenzie Barge and was considered the "beach watchman".

Al Neil's cabin, as far as I know, is the last remaining example of the many hundreds of squatter dwellings that once dotted the foreshore of Burrard Inlet.

## CONCLUSION

The foreshore cabin at the McKenzie site has strong local and regional cultural, historic, and artistic value because:

- It is the last remaining foreshore dwelling from among the many hundreds of such 'squatter' dwellings in the Vancouver region that once dotted the shores of Burrard Inlet and provided homes for marginalized people, including labourers, seniors, artists, and 'free-spirits'.
- It is a highly symbolic building because it tangibly connects us to a now-vanished way of life when people could live 'off-the-grid' and on the waterfront within the bounds of a rapidly urbanizing metropolitan area where private access to the waterfront is now restricted to the wealthy and the well-connected.
- For almost fifty years, the cabin was lived in by one of the region's foremost experimental artists, Al Neil. The cabin and its foreshore site have also acted as a home and a muse for thirty-five years to Neil's partner, noted artist Carole Itter.
- On the site, in and on the cabin, and adjacent to it (on the beach, on the deck, and in the trees) there are significant sculptural works of art co-created over many years by Al Neil and Carole Itter.

Nancy Kirkpatrick  
Director, North Vancouver Museum & Archives



## ATTACHMENTS



View of cabin and deck (to the right) from the water



Approaching the cabin from Cates Park



Entrance facade



View from deck toward Burrard Inlet



View of the deck





Façade facing the beach



Façade opposite the entrance



Sculptural assemblage on beach by cabin



Assemblage on entrance facade

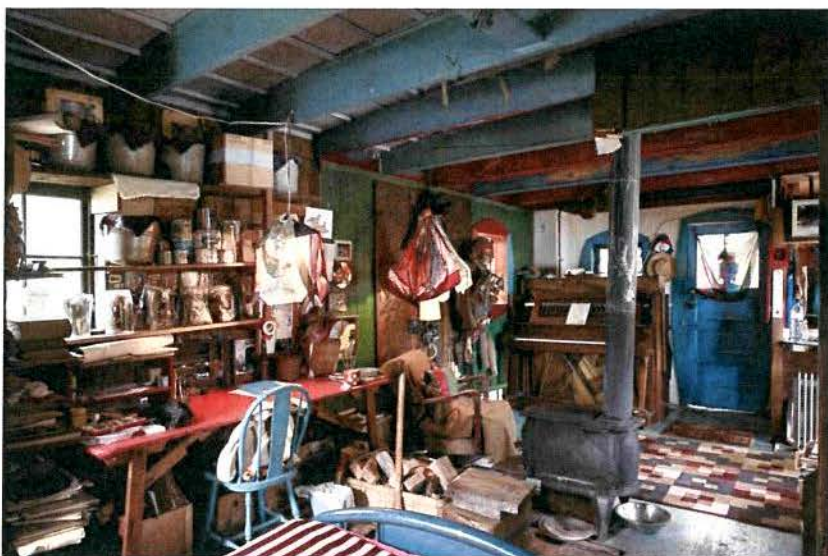


Large assemblage in the trees



Detail of central part of large assemblage





Photograph of interior taken by internationally renowned Vancouver photographer Stan Douglas. This photo was provided to the author by Glenn Alteen.

**NOTE:** The original version of this photo is a copyrighted work of art which we do not have permission to reproduce.

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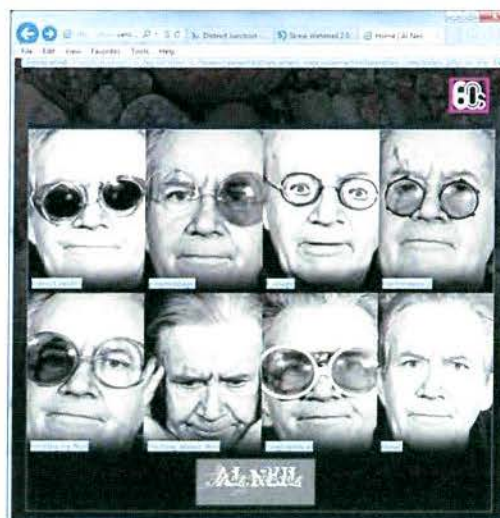
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Right: There is a full chapter on Al Neil in the excellent website *Vancouver Art in the Sixties*.  
<http://alnel.vancouverartinthesixties.com/>





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