

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH & REVISED STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE



October 6,
2020

780 Blanshard Street, Victoria BC



The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of research undertaken on the British Columbia Power Commission Building built in 1949-50, and the architect Henry Whittaker. The result of the research provides updated information on historical data and culminates in a newly revised Statement of Significance for consideration.

Merinda J. Conley, Principal | Heritage Consultant

Cover Letter

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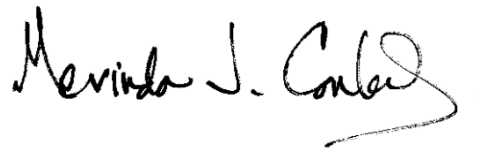
**RE: Summary of Research and
Revised Statement of Significance
780 Blanshard Street, Victoria, BC**

Dear Juan,

As requested, I am pleased to submit a summary of the research results for the BC Power Commission Building at 780 Blanshard Street in the City of Victoria. The Statement of Significance has also been revised to reflect our findings.

Please feel free to contact me by email or at 403.861.8040 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Warm Regards,



Merinda J. Conley, Heritage Consultant

MAAA (IA), MRAIC, CET | M.E.Des (Arch), Dip.Arch.Tech.(Hon.) | NCI Certified



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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the research undertaken on the BC Power Commission Building, and the architect Henry Whittaker. The result of the research provides updated information on historical data and culminates in a newly revised Statement of Significance, located in Appendix A.6. for consideration by the City of Victoria.

The BC Power Commission was created by the Electric Power Act of 1945. The mandate of the Commission was to stimulate population growth and industrialization by merging generation and distribution facilities into one system and deliver electricity to many communities that were without power. The utility was publicly owned until its amalgamation with BC Electric in 1962 to form what is now known as BC Hydro.

The BC Power Commission building is listed on the City of Victoria’s Heritage Register and, as noted in the CRD Art Deco and Moderne survey undertaken by Donald Luxton, is considered *“one of the best buildings of this period in the province.”*

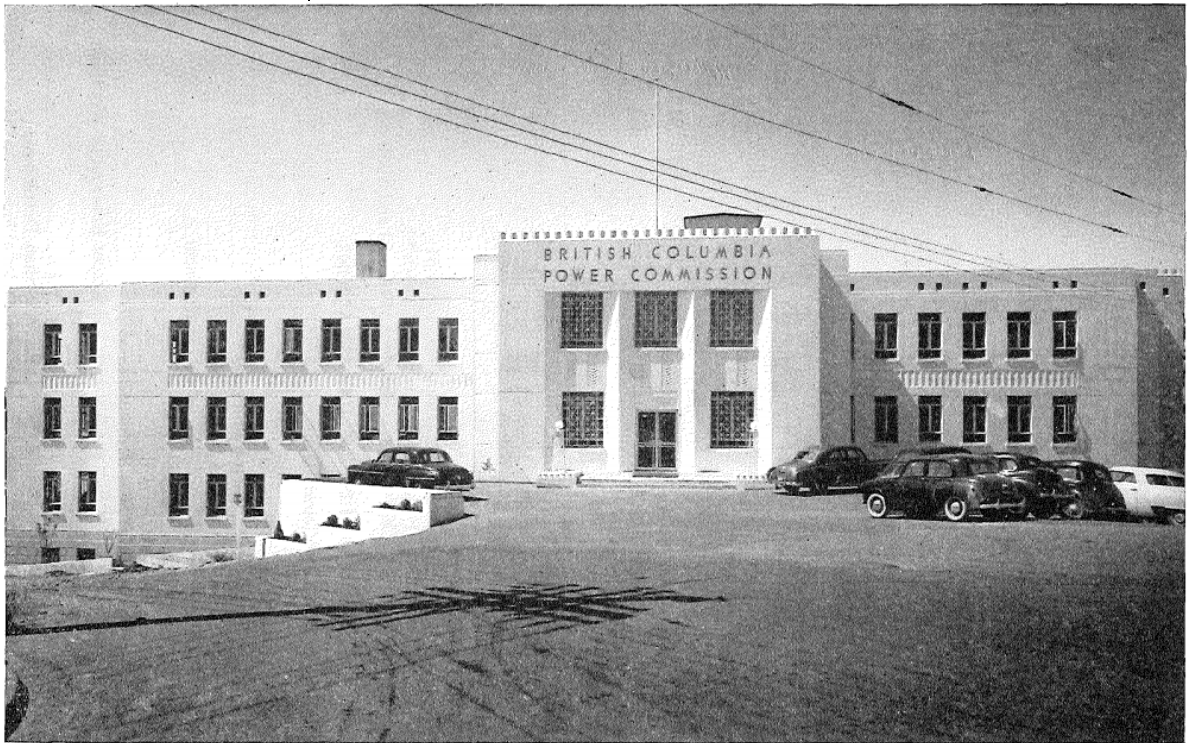
Designed by the provincial Chief Architect, Henry Whittaker, the building was built in 1949-50 as an administrative headquarters for the Commission. Some sources state the building was constructed in 1939-40 and was initially to function as a hospital. However, there is no evidence to validate such use and the Building Permit issued on October 12, 1949 confirms period of construction. The 6th Annual Report of the British Columbia Power Commission for the Year Ended March 31st, 1951 states:

“The administration building in Victoria was completed before the close of the fiscal year, the staff moving into the new quarters at the end of January, 1951. This centralization brought about a reorganization between head office and power district staff, producing greater efficiency and economy by eliminating the need for regional offices at Nanaimo and Vernon.”



Constructed at a cost of \$476,915.00, the poured-in-place concrete building is situated on a sloped triangular site creating a structure that has two visible storeys on the northern façade and four storeys on the south facing elevation. Its architectural style is a late expression of Art Deco composed of geometric forms and ornamentation that includes horizontal banding along the first floor; chevron spandrels and horizontal bands of vertical beveled geometrics and half-disc motifs; beveled roof termination; decorative metal window grills on the north entrance, and the vertical corrugated glass panels separated by four vertical quadrangular pilasters that accentuate the west entrance.

Although the interior of the building is not within the scope of this report, it is worthy to note that the original spatial interior configurations, such as the oval Conference Room (originally the Chairman’s Office), the “blond” unstained wood paneling, three-storey aluminum stairwell screen with B.C.P. initials, and interior fittings and fixtures related to the building’s original design retain heritage value.



Administration Building, Victoria.

Figure 1: Source of photograph: The 6th Annual Report of the British Columbia Power Commission for the Year Ended March 31st, 1951

Research Summary

BC ARCHIVES

The BC Archives, located at the Royal BC Museum in Victoria, has general Department of Public Works correspondence files on microfilm from 1910-1970 concerned primarily with Provincial Government buildings, including the Parliament Buildings, Provincial Archives, Provincial Museum, as well as jails, courthouses, hospitals, and office buildings throughout the province. The Archives transferred photographs to Visual Records Accession 198104-017. The records reference photographs of the Douglas Building (designed by Henry Whittaker in 1949-50) dating from January 1955 to July 1969 (Reel B01544 & B01545). There is also reference to a Hospital Insurance Building: Temporary Building #4 and Civic Service Building with archived photographs dating from January 1950 to March 1969 (Reel No. B01546). The Queens Printer Building is also referenced from January 1914 to October 1966 (Reel No. B01655).

Due to COVID 19 precautions, BC Archives just expanded their onsite services to the general public on September 14th. An appointment request was sent on September 16, 2020 to access these files. Access to the Public Works Correspondence is restricted as they contain CVs and correspondence about personnel, thus a research agreement is required, which would not be approved until after October 9. The wait for an appointment is also at least a month due to the limit of five research slots per day, thus priority legal research has precedence.

In light of this, BC Archives undertook a fast perusal of the reels for information on the BC Power Commission building (as well as the Douglas and Queen's Printer buildings) regarding Henry Whittaker, original materials, exterior paint colours, and layers of alterations. On September 24th, their review of the reels confirmed there was no relevant information that would be of any use.

CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT

The Capital Regional District (CRD) commissioned Heritage Consultant, Donald Luxton, to survey and rate Art Deco and Moderne buildings in the district, which included the City of Victoria, the Municipality of Esquimalt, and major streets elsewhere in the district. Each building was rated on a scale to indicate how valuable the building is in terms of its representation of the Art Deco or Moderne style. A five-star rating represents an *“Excellent example; highest possible recommendation for retention under any circumstances.”*

Luxton’s report describes the building mass, construction, exterior and interior detailing of 780 Blanshard Street. Luxton assigned a five-star rating to the BC Power Commission building, stating that *“The building displays excellent detailing both inside and out and is in very good condition. This is one of the best buildings of this period in the province.”*

A portion of the CRD Art Deco and Moderne report on the BCPW building can be found in Appendix A.2.

CITY OF VICTORIA

The City of Victoria holds files on all Registered and Designated heritage buildings. These files often contain Statements of Significance, archival photographs, newspaper articles, correspondence, reports, and other resource information. Building and Building Permit Cards also provide important information that can be used to confirm date of construction and additional work or alterations during the life of the building. The Registered building file for 780 Blanshard contained a number of items that assist with exploring the timeline for the BC Power Commission Building.

Daily Colonist articles show Calls for Tender issued on September 7th and 8th, 1949. Tenders were to be accompanied by a certified cheque for the sum of \$30,000 made payable to British Columbia’s Power Commission, and would be returned to the unsuccessful tenderers, and in the case of the successful tenderer, retained as a guarantee of satisfactory completion of the work. The tender described a three-storey building of reinforced concrete with the main

Calls Tenders For Building

Tenders have been called for the British Columbia Power Commission's new administration building to be constructed in the triangle bounded by Burdett, Blanshard and McClure Streets, S. R. Weston, chairman, announced yesterday.

The new structure will be three stories of reinforced concrete with a total floor area of 34,000 square feet. Main entrance onto the middle floor will front toward the corner of Burdett and Blanshard Streets. The main floor will house the offices of the commissioners, general office and board room. The lower floor will be used entirely by the commission's engineering department.

Provision has been made for an automatic elevator and alterable bids have been called, with and without the elevator.

The building has been designed so that a fourth story can be added.

H. C. Whittaker, formerly chief provincial architect, is acting for the commission.

Mr. Weston noted that, since its inception in 1946, the commission has expanded its business rapidly and now supplies service to more than 35,000 customers.

Figure 2: Call for Tender, Daily Colonist, September 7, 1949

7 Sept 1949
S.R.

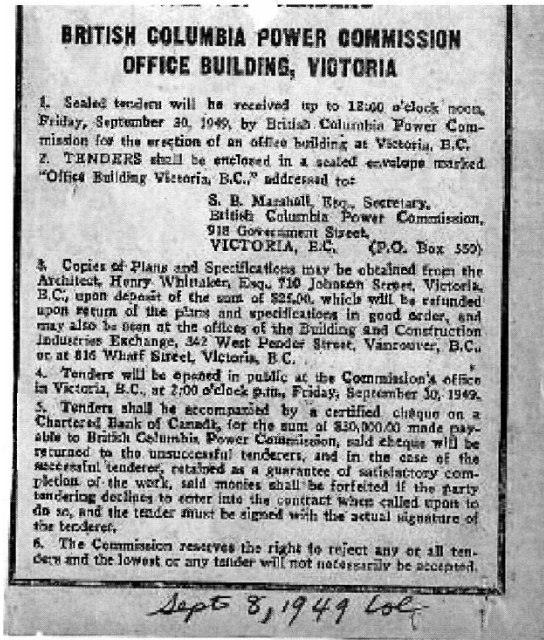


Figure 4: Call for Tender, Daily Colonist, September 8, 1949

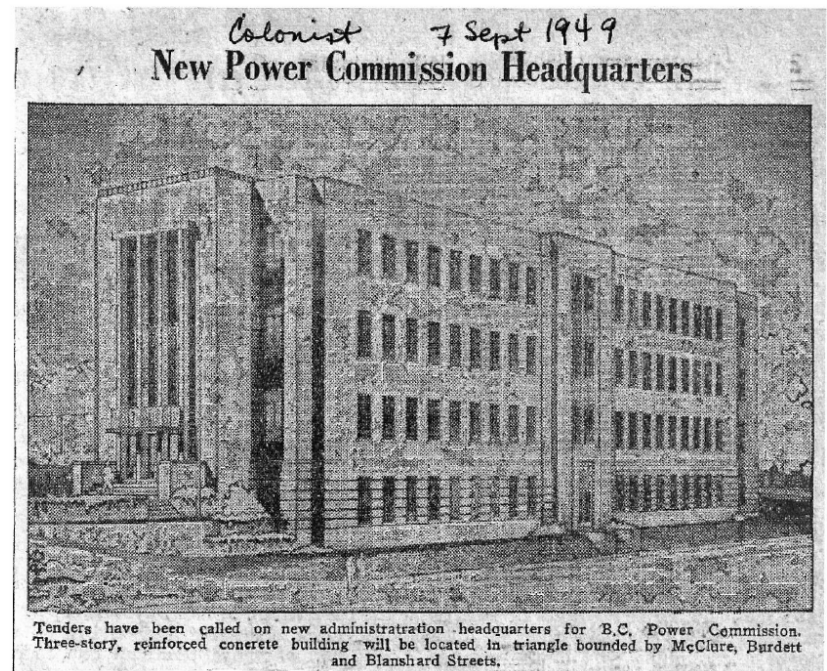


Figure 3: New Power Commission Headquarters, Daily Colonist, September 7, 1949

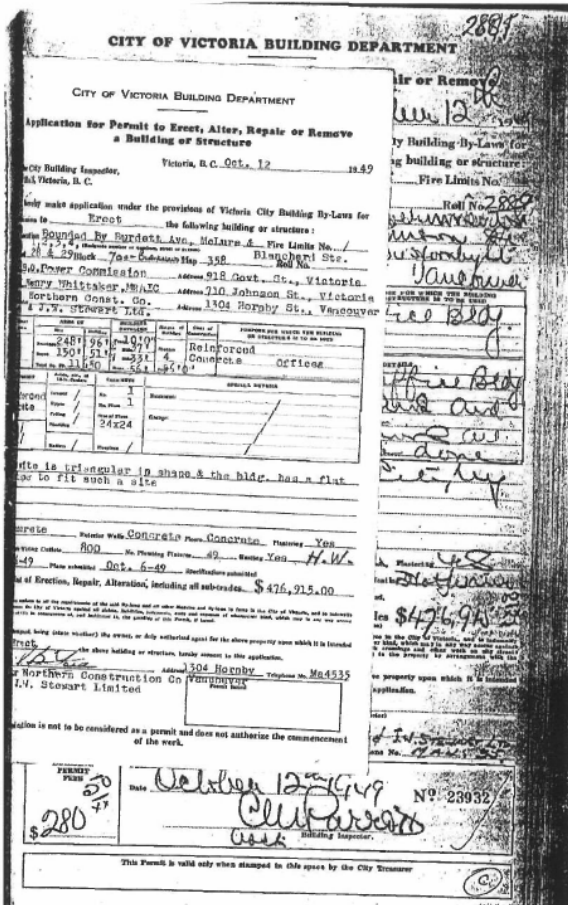


Figure 5: Building Permit, City of Victoria, October 12, 1949

entrance fronting toward the corner of Burdett and Blanshard Streets. The main floor was to house the offices of the commissioners, general office, and boardroom. The lower floor was to be used entirely for the Commission's engineering department. The tender also stated that provisions had been made for an automatic elevator and alternate bids had been called, with and without the elevator. It also describes the building being designed so that a fourth storey could be added. At the time of the tender, H. G. Whittaker was no longer the chief provincial architect, but was acting for the Commission at the time.

A Building Permit for the BC Power Commission Building was issued on October 12, 1949. The cost to erect the building, including all sub-trades was \$476,915.00. Henry Whittaker is noted as the architect, and Northern Construction Co. from Vancouver and J.W. Stewart Ltd as the builders. The following day, on October 13, 1949, issued building permits valued at more than \$3,000,000 set a new one-day record in a single day of operations. The largest single building permit ever issued was made to Northern Construction Co. and J.W. Stewart Ltd. of Vancouver, for the construction of the new \$2,062,700 Post Office and Federal Building on Government Street. This was the same company that was issued the

(54858-in 2006)

Location: Blanshard 780 PLAN # 23932-3410 01-027-001

Lot: 1, 2, 3, 4 Block: Section: 254 Plan: 35 B Roll: 2000

Date: 24.7.50 Permit No: 23922 Value: \$ 476,915.

Owner or Agent: B.C. POWER COMMISSION B.C. BUILDINGS CORPORATION

Address: 780 BLANSHARD ST.

Architect: Contractor: Lico:

Zone District: Fire Limits:

Occupancy: OFFICES No. of Rooms:

Converted to: Date: Case No:

Class Construction: Size Bldg: Height:

Size Lot: Setbacks: (side) (front) (back)

Joists: (Ornd) (2nd) (3rd) (Celling)

Foundation: Ext. Walls: Posts: Beams:

Floors: Rafters: Chimneys: Basement:

Roof: Stairs: Exits: Heating:

Plumbing: RR 13064 (7.10) Wiring:

Other Structures:

| Alterations and Repairs | Date | Permit | Value |
|---|----------|--------|-----------|
| REMOVE EXISTING CONCRETE PAD FOR STORAGE OFFICE IN BOARD ROOM | 7.6.53 | 35110 | \$ 1125 |
| REMOVE EXISTING ALTERATIONS TO PARTITIONS | 14.10.55 | 36137 | \$ 20,600 |
| INSTALL NEW A.C. STAIRWAY ETC. AS PER PLAN # | | | |
| STAINLESS STEEL VESTIBULE INSTALL MINERAL ACOUSTIC BOARD ON CEILING OF OFFICE | 22.7.52 | 29153 | \$ 10,344 |
| BUILDING IN ACCORDANCE WITH CITY BY-LAWS (F.W. BARRISS) REMOVE EXISTING TILE PARTITIONS ON 4 th FLOOR. NO ALTERATION IN OCCUPANCY. | 19.6.57 | 39215 | \$ 1000 |
| INSTALL NEW PARTITIONS GENERAL ALTERATIONS - FURNISH CONSTRUCTION | 9.6.64 | 54538 | \$ 900 |
| F. W. BARRISS (SUNNY) TEND ONLY | 08.2.66 | 14993 | |
| REMOVE EXISTING MARBLE FRONT & REPLACE WITH STUCCO | 6.5.71 | 66777 | 2500 |
| INTERIOR ALTERATIONS TO OFFICES | 11.10.72 | 15637 | |
| ALTER & CODE UPGRADING TO OFFICES | 8.04.73 | 76757 | 140,000 |
| INSTALL 20' x 12' CONCRETE PAD FOR STORAGE OFFICES | 9.20.73 | 40955 | 50,000 |
| ADD HANDICAP RAMP - NORTH ENTRANCE OFFICE | 7.2.00 | 91191 | 8,600 |

| ALTERATIONS & REPAIRS | DATE | PERMIT | VALUE |
|---|----------|--------|--------|
| INSTALL 20' x 12' CONCRETE PAD FOR STORAGE OFFICE | 9.20.73 | 40955 | 50,000 |
| INTERIOR ALTERATIONS TO OFFICES | 11.10.72 | 15637 | |
| UPGRADING TO EXISTING WASHROOMS - OFFICE | 9.5.03 | 74809 | 41,600 |

Figure 6: 780 Blanshard Street Building Cards, City of Victoria

construction permit of \$476,915.00 for the BC Power Commission Building at 780 Blanshard Street.

The Building Card dated July 24, 1950 identifies the building owner as the BC Power Commission, and the building occupancy intended for offices. The value of construction at the time is again noted as \$476,915.00. Ownership was later changed to the BC Buildings Corporation, a government entity established as a Crown Corporation on June 30, 1976. The mandate of the Corporation was to manage the accommodation requirements for provincial government services. The Corporation was dissolved in 2006.

The Building Card details building alterations and repairs from July 1952 to March 1995, such as:

- **July 1952** - install mineral acoustic board on office building ceilings
- **June 1955** - erect partitions in the Boardroom
- **October 1955** - alterations to partitions and install new A.C. stairway
- **June 1957** - remove and install new 4th floor tile partitions and general alterations
- **May 1971** - remove exterior marble front and replace with stucco
- **April 1980** - alterations and code upgrading to offices
- **March 1992** - interior alterations to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd floor offices
- **June 1992** - Add handicap ramp - north entrance
- **September 1993** - Install 20' x 12' concrete pad for storage - offices
- **December 1993** - Interior alterations to offices
- **May 1995** - interior upgrading to four existing washrooms - office

A plaque located in the interior lobby of the building describes a version of history on 780 Blanshard Street. The description is an excerpt from the Capital Regional District report *Art Deco and Moderne* written by Donald Luxton. The photograph of the plaque is not very legible thus the description is provided in the body of this report, as follows:



A Little History on 780 Blanshard Street

(as described on plaque written by Donald Luxton)

The building we occupy was designed by H. Whittaker, Chief Architect for the provincial Department of Public Works in the late 1940s. Best estimate of completion was in 1949 or 1950. It was originally designed as a hospital, but never used as such. Its first use was as the British Columbia Power Commission Building, and the faint outline of its incised signage is still visible over the third floor entrance.

780 Blanshard is a very fine example of Art Deco architecture (see ART DECO photo for a definition of the style). Excellent use is made of an irregular sloping site to bury the mass of the building from the north side, while from the south it rises to four stories. The structure and exterior walls are poured concrete: ornamentation is derived from bands and panels of zigzag geometrics that are carried across the building and even around the retaining walls. There is a consistent use of stylistic motifs that unifies the bulky mass of the building and intensifies its formalistic nature.

Due to the sloping site, each side elevation is different. Openings for entries have been established at different levels throughout, with the main (north) entrance being on the third floor. Especially worthy of note is the stair tower and second floor entrance on the west elevation, with tall corrugated glass windows that run up an interior stair well. In the divisions between the stairs there is a bent aluminum screen that runs up the three stories and incorporates frozen fountain motifs as well as the BCP initials worked into the octagonal insets. The ceiling banding in this stairwell is a triple horizontal aluminum section.

The third floor entrance lobby is an excellent example of a vernacular adaptation of Art Deco, with flush wood paneling, fluted columns and covings that show interpretations of classical elements and an overall richness of detail and finish. The interior fittings are virtually intact, especially in the public spaces: light fixtures, doorways, and washrooms (since modernized) remain in their original condition.

Of particular interest is the Conference Room (Room 302) which was originally the Chairman's office (also see "The Round Room" attached). It may have been here that the



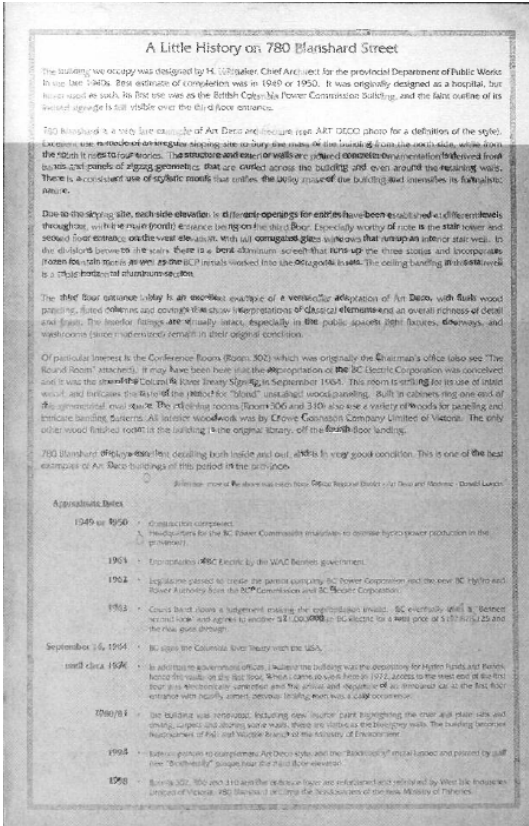


Figure 7: Plaque located in the interior lobby of 780 Blanshard Street.

expropriation of the BC Electric Corporation was conceived, and it was the site of the Columbia River Treaty Signing in September 1964. This room is striking for its use of inlaid wood and indicates the taste of the period for “blond” unstained wood paneling. Built-in cabinets ring one end of the symmetrical oval space. The adjoining rooms (Room 306 and 310) also use a variety of woods for paneling and intricate banding patterns. All interior woodworks were by Crowe Gonnason Company Limited of Victoria. The only other wood finished room in the building is the original library, off the fourth floor landing.

780 Blanshard displays excellent detailing both inside and out and is in very good condition. This is one of the best examples of Art Deco buildings of this period in the province.

Approximate Dates (as detailed on plaque)

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1949 or 1950 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction completed. Headquarters for the BC Power Commission mandate to oversee hydro power production in the province. |
| 1961 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expropriation of BC Electric by the WAC Bennett government. |
| 1962 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislature passed to create the parent company BC Power Corporation and the new BC Hydro and Power Authority from the BCP Commission and BC Electric Corporation. |
| 1963 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Courts hand down a judgement making the expropriation invalid. BC eventually has a 'Bennett second look' and agrees to another \$21,000,000 for BC Electric for a total price of \$192,828,125 and the deal goes through. |
| September 16, 1964 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BC signs the Columbia River Treaty with the USA. |
| Until circa 1974 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to government offices, I believe the building was the expository for Hydro Funds and Bonds, hence the vault on the first floor. When I came to work here in 1972, access to the west end of the first floor was electronically controlled and the arrival and departure |



| | |
|----------------|---|
| | of an armoured car at the first floor entrance with heavily armed, nervous looking men was a daily occurrence. |
| 1980/81 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The building was renovated, including new interior paint highlighting the chair and plate rails and coving, carpets, and altering some walls. These are visible as the blue/grey walls. The building becomes headquarters of Fish and Wildlife Branch of the Ministry of Environment. |
| 1994 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exterior painted to complement Art Deco style, and one “Biodiversity” mural funded and painted by staff (see “Biodiversity” plaque near the third floor elevator). |
| 1998 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rooms 302, 306 and 310 and the entrance foyer are re-stained and refinished by West Isle Industries Limited of Victoria. 780 Blanshard became the headquarters of the new Ministry of Fisheries. |

CIVILIZATION.CA

In the original Statement of Significance, it is referenced that the BC Power Commission Building was built to initially function as a hospital. However, there is no evidence confirming this. With Invitations to Tender and articles referencing a four-storey administrative office building, it was thought there could be a connection to the administrative function of BC’s Hospital Insurance Plan Service. The Canadian Museum of History website was sourced for information on the history of Health Care in Canada, 1948-1958 related to British Columbia’s Liberal-Conservative coalition government’s introduction of a Hospital Insurance Service plan in 1948 and found no history or connection to 780 Blanshard Street in Victoria.



DAILY COLONIST (*TC's first issue published September. 2. 1980*)

Several articles referencing H. Whittaker and the BC Power Commission Building were found in the Daily Colonist Archives, starting on June 9, 1949 announcing that the Chief Architect for the province would soon be ending his 36 years of service with the province. The 1949 Calls for Tenders were also found (located in City of Victoria building file), articles during construction, and tenders issued by the British Columbia Building Corporation in 1979 for re-roofing approximately 11,000 square feet of roof area to the 780 Blanshard Street building. The Building Corporation then issued a Tender on March 19, 1980 for unspecified renovations to the building and then issued a revised Invitation to Tender is on April 4, 1980 for interior demolition, construction of partitions, electrical and telephone installation, interior painting, millwork, and hardware.

A chronological list of Daily Colonist articles is as follows:

- **June 9, 1949** - B.C. Architect, Henry Whittaker Soon to End 36 Years' Service (*page 14*)
- **July 16, 1949** - Top Architect of Government Ends Service (*page 3*)
- **September 7, 1949** - Calls for Tender for Building
- **September 7, 1949** - New Power Commission Headquarters
- **September 8, 1949** - British Columbia Power Commission Office Building, Victoria (*Invitation to Tender*)
- **October 13, 1949** - The Local Scene: City Sets New One-Day Record as Building Rush Hits Officials (*page 3*)
- **February 22, 1950** - Expect to Finish Work by Autumn on New \$477,000 Office Building (*page 3*)
- **July 23, 1950** - Building for a Greater Victoria, New British Columbia Power Commission Building (*page 42*)
- **May 11, 1979** - Invitation to Tender for Re-roofing (*page 51*)
- **March 19, 1980** - Invitation to Tender for unspecified renovations (*page 47*)
- **April 4, 1980** - Invitation to Tender for interior renovations (*page 49*)

Top Architect Of Government Ends Service

Henry Whittaker, Chief Architect of the British Columbia Government ended 35 years of Government service in a brief ceremony yesterday in the office of Hon. E. C. Carson, Minister of Public Works.

On behalf of the department Mr. Carson gave him a gold wrist watch and an autograph book signed by members of the staff.

Mr. Whittaker joined the Government as assistant to the supervising architect in 1910, was acting supervising architect during the Great War and was appointed chief architect in 1919.

EFFECTIVE JUNE 30

His retirement was effective June 30.

He designed most provincial construction projects over the last 30 years, including the Esmondale Mental Hospital and the Tranquille Sanitarium. His last job was designing the new office buildings that will soon be under construction on Douglas Street.

In presenting the watch to Mr. Whittaker, Mr. Carson said "he has left behind a monument of buildings in this province that will be pretty hard to beat in years to come."

G. B. Ford takes his place as chief architect.

Figure 9: Daily Colonist: June 16, 1949, page 3.

B.C. Architect, Henry Whittaker Soon to End 36 Years' Service

Provincial Architect Henry Whittaker, 1815 Hollywood Crescent, will terminate 36 years of service with the Provincial Government, 35 of which he has spent as chief archi-



HENRY WHITTAKER

tect, when he retires at the end of this month.

However, substantial reminders of his work will remain throughout British Columbia.

These include all the buildings at Tranquille Sanitarium constructed since 1925, most of the buildings at Esmondale Mental Hospital, including those now under construction, new Provincial Government offices at Government and Elliott Streets, additions to St. Joseph's Hospital, and hospitals at Smithers, Oliver, Prince Rupert, Hazelton, Burns Lake, Kelowna and Rossland.

OTHER WORKS

Mr. Whittaker also supervised construction of the motor vehicle building in Vancouver and drafting of recently-completed plans for a new T.B. wing at Vancouver General Hospital.

Following his retirement, he plans to resume limited private practice.

Born in Rio de Janeiro, where his father was a cotton manufacturer, Mr. Whittaker received most of his training in England and was ar-

titled to an Accreditation, Lancashire firm of architects.

He was appointed assistant architect here on May 3, 1913, having previously been in the service of the Government of the Egyptian Sudan, then a British mandate.

In 1912, Mr. Whittaker performed land evaluation work for the Lloyd George Government.

He is a past president of the Architects' Institute of British Columbia and also a former vice-president of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada.

He will be succeeded as chief architect by Assistant Architect G. B. Ford who, however, is scheduled to retire in September.

Figure 8: Daily Colonist: June 9, 1949, page 14.

The Local Scene

With Additional District News on Page 21

City Sets New One-Day Record As Building Rush Hits Officials

Without question yesterday was the biggest day in the history of the city building department, according to J. W. Oosterink, city building inspector.

Building permits authorizing new construction valued at more than \$3,000,000 were issued by the building inspector in the single day of operations.

Probably the largest single building permit ever issued by the city was made out to Northern Construction Co. and J. W. Stewart Ltd. of Vancouver, for the construction of the new \$2,062,700 Post Office and Federal Building on Government Street.

The same company was also issued the permit for construction of the \$476,915 B.C. Power Commission Building at 780 Blanshard Street. The proposed four-story office building will hold 11,659 square feet of floor space and is to be constructed of reinforced concrete.

Figure 10: Daily Colonist: October 13, 1949, page 3.

Expect to Finish Work by Autumn On New \$477,000 Office Building

The British Columbia Power Commission's new office building, now under construction on the triangle of land formed by the intersections of Humboldt, Blanshard and McClure Streets, will be ready for occupation late this Autumn. Henry Whittaker, architect in charge, predicted yesterday this building would be occupied well before the year's end. More than 2,000 cubic yards of

rock has been drilled, blasted and removed from the site of the \$477,000 structure. Some of this rock will be brought back to be used in terracing the site.

SLOWED BY WEATHER

Weather has slowed the excavation and the early concrete work, Mr. Whittaker explained. Moreover, excavation had to be taken unexpectedly deep in some places—30 feet at one point—to find bed-rock.

Contractors, Northern Construction Company and J. W. Stewart Limited, will have a crew of more than 50 men on the job shortly.

"We can estimate completing about a floor a month," Mr. Whittaker said. "The roof slab should be on by the end of June."

PRE-MIXED CEMENT

Cement for this four-story steel and concrete structure will be pre-mixed and truck-hauled for pouring by Evans, Coleman & Johnson Limited. This method precludes the need of mixing machinery on the job and generally speeds up operation.

Concrete workers, general construction laborers and carpenters are already at work and plumbers and electricians will be able to commence setting pipe immediately.

Figure 11: Daily Colonist: February 22, 1959, page 3.



Figure 12: Daily Colonist: July 23, 1950, page 42.

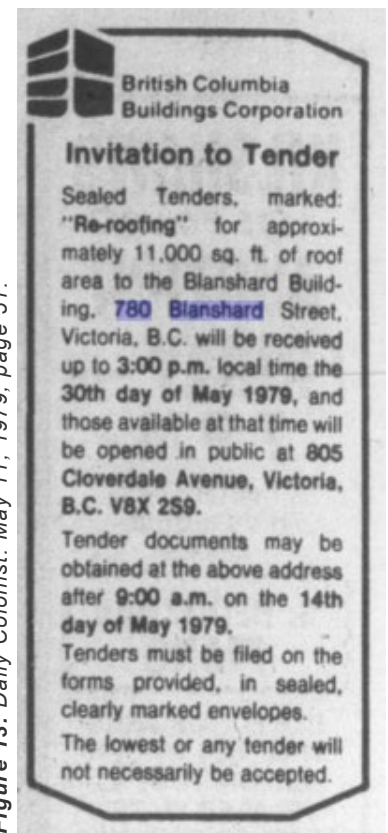


Figure 13: Daily Colonist: May 11, 1979, page 51.

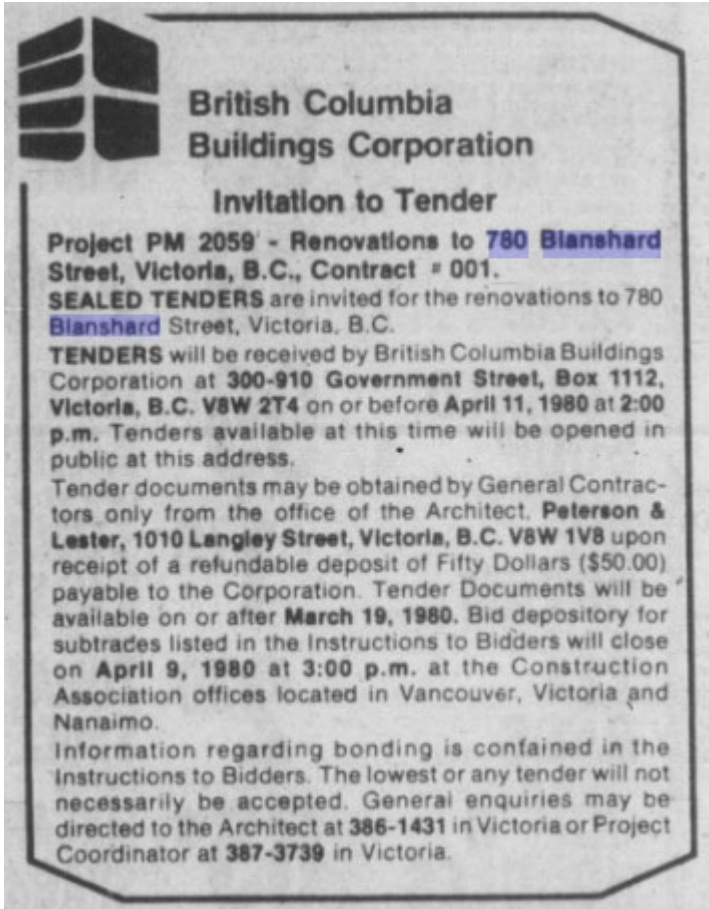


Figure 14: Daily Colonist: March 19, 1980, page 47



Figure 15: Daily Colonist: April 4, 1980, page 49

HALLMARK SOCIETY

At the time of this research, the Hallmark Society was undergoing a restructuring of its website, moving its site www.hallmarksociety.ca to <http://hallmarkheritagesociety.ca> and archival data on buildings, articles and newspaper clippings was not available. However, correspondence from the Hallmark Society was forwarded to the British Columbia Buildings Corporation on June 11, 1992 regarding alterations planned for 780 Blanshard Street. The letter reinforces the heritage value of 780 Blanshard Street, and its 5-star rating given by Mr. Luxton due to it being *“one of the best buildings of this period in the province.”* It also notes that, *“Any changes or alterations to 780 Blanshard should be done very carefully to preserve the original ambience of the building and to enhance, rather than disguise its architectural merit.”* A copy of the letter can be found in Appendix A.1.



The dawning of a new age of power: The original BCPC logo was very visible on the bright red commission trucks.

Figure 16: BC Power Commission Logo (Logo obtained from BC Hydro Power Pioneers website www.powerpioneers.com/bc-hydro-history/1945-1962/)

POWER PIONEERS

BC Hydro Power Pioneers website

www.powerpioneers.com/bc-hydro-history/1945-1962/

provides interesting history on BC Hydro between 1945 - 1962 regarding employees, returning veterans from the Second World War, and experienced power-utility workers “inherited” from other companies.

The BC Power Commission’s goal was to give “*Power to the People.*” The Power Pioneers website describes that,

“After the Second World War, one of the biggest obstacles to growth in British Columbia was power-or the lack of it. Outside Victoria and Vancouver, countless communities were scattered over a vast, rugged territory. To fulfill BC’s potential, these smaller cities, towns, villages, and even individual ranches and homesteads needed the services enjoyed by the majority of the population in major centres. Numerous communities in BC did get power from small diesel and hydroelectric plants. Some of these tiny utilities were run by the local municipality. Others were privately owned and were often kept going with old-and sometimes unpredictable-machinery held together by all manner of materials and techniques.”

The Electric Power Act was passed in the legislature in 1945 by Premier John Hart, at which point the British Columbia Power Commission (BCPC) was created.

“The Commission’s task was twofold. First, it would meld the existing hodgepodge of generation and distribution facilities spread across the province-and outside BC Electric’s territory-into one system. Second, it would extend service to many communities that didn’t have power at all. The goal was to spur population growth and industrialization in BC. In July, the Commission acquired its first utility, the Nanaimo Duncan Utilities (NDU) on Vancouver Island. Fifteen years later, the Power Commission had added more than 200 communities to its system.”

The BCPC and BC Electric merged in the early 1960s to create the new BC Hydro in existence today.

In the *Province of British Columbia Minister of Public Works Report for the Fiscal Year 1951-52* (page 14), Chief Provincial Architect C.D. Campbell notes the new permanent office building and boiler plant (Douglas Building) was completed in June 1951.

It can be concluded that the Hospital Insurance Commission building (a cost of \$174,246.09) is not the BC Power Commission Building, and the “permanent office building” referenced in the annual reports is the Douglas Building. What is confusing is that the annual reports do not mention the BC Power Commission Building, nor any reference to the construction of a hospital for this site. There is also no reference to the construction cost of \$476,915.00 as noted on the City of Victoria’s building permit issued for the BC Power Commission Building on October 12, 1949.

Due to variations in date of construction from various sources (1938-39, 1939-40 and 1949-50) the annual Public Works reports were reviewed from 1935 to 1955. At the completion of this document, the 1951-52 fiscal report could no longer be found, and the 1952-53 fiscal report was never found.

BIOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW OF ARCHITECT HENRY WHITTAKER

There are a few sources that provide a history of architect Henry Whittaker’s career and refer to the BC Power Commission Building. The website *Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada* at www.dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org provides a detailed overview of architect, Henry Whittaker, as does Donald Luxton’s *Building the West: The Early Architects of British Columbia*.

Henry Whittaker was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on May 15, 1885. He retired in 1954 and died in Victoria on August 18, 1971. Whittaker came to Canada in 1913, after which he became an assistance in the drafting department of the BC Public Works Department in Victoria. Although other sources offer differing information, the fiscal year reports of the Minister of Public Works provide a reliable account that show Whittaker was promoted to Acting Supervising Architect in

1917-18, to Supervising Architect in 1918-19, and then to Chief Architect for the province in 1928-29 until leaving his position in 1949. Whittaker was also the First Vice-President of The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC) in 1936, and later serving on the RAIC Council. He also served as President of the AIBC in 1935-37.

The *Dictionary of Architects in Canada* biography identifies the Power Commission Building as one of Whittaker's best works. However, they date the building's construction as 1938-39. Evidence from research shows the actual construction date to be 1949-50. Although Whittaker retired as Chief Architect on June 30, 1949, he entered private practice in partnership with Donald Wagg, and continued to advise on government projects, including the Power Commission Building.

As noted in the CDS's *Paint Sample Analysis* report, Henry Whittaker also designed the **Douglas Building** situated at 617 Government Street in Victoria and constructed in 1949-50.



Figure 18: Douglas Building West Front Elevation



Figure 19: Douglas Building Southwest Front Elevation

The Douglas Building's multi-hued colour palette is not original. In reference to a 2019 *Heritage Report and Paint Analysis* by Stuart Stark & Associates, surface layers over the base concrete consisted of a Grey (top layer of deteriorated concrete), Cream (original layer), Tan-brown, Cream, and finally a faded Green top coat. The report states the layers were thin (similar to the BCPC building) and applied at some point between 1971 and 1994.

Among the many buildings Henry Whittaker designed while Chief Architect of the BC Department of Public Works were the **Penticton Court House** situated at 100 Main Street in Penticton, BC and constructed in 1948-49; and a **Provincial Government Building** situated at 100 - 420 Cumberland Road, Courtenay BC also constructed in 1948-49.



Figure 20: Penticton Court House



Figure 21: Courtenay Provincial Government Building

OTHER SOURCES

A telephone interview occurred between Lauren Martin and Hugo Wong on July 24, 2020. Mr. Wong had undertaken some research on the building and worked at the building in a temporary position in Communications while the Ministry of Environment was vacating the space. The following points are some of the findings and assumptions he shared during the interview:

- The plaque was placed in the lobby in 1997 and approximately 80% of the information is accurate.
- Call for Tender was for an office building and the reference to a hospital remains a mystery.
- He does not know the original colours.
- Henry Whittaker took out the Building Permit for the BCPW building prior to leaving in 1949.
- In the UBC Open Library, the 6th Annual Report of the BC Power Commission states that staff moved into the building in January 1951.
- Victoria Hallmark Society states the windows in the building are “Crittall” windows, which are steel; however, Hugo Wong believes the windows are aluminum.
- The doors have a label with the same American company name that makes Crittall windows, and they remain in business.
- The building was drafty so some of the windows were sealed shut.
- Believes the interior wood is from endangered rainforests.
- Frank Stanley Martin photographs held by the BC Archives may have relevant photos of the area.
- There are a number of interior photographs inside along the corridor. Hugo Wong has more recent photographs, but would need permission to release them.
- Front door and wheelchair ramp not original.
- Douglas Building at 617 Government Street has many similarities.
- Does not believe the Treaty signing occurred in the BCPC building.
- Does not believe there have been major alterations to the building.

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY MURAL

The Wildlife Diversity Mural on the north entrance of the BC Power Commission Building was painted by Victoria artist, Rick Thomas, in 1994. Rick Thomas was an employee of BC's Ministry of Environment at the time. The mural was funded by the Ministry, and Thomas was assisted by other employees to complete the mural over a two-week period. A copy of his blog describing the process that led up to the mural's design and application can be found in Appendix A.5.

Prior to the application of this mural, the BC Power Commission Building was painted in multi-coloured earth tones possibly near the same time the Douglas Building was similarly painted with multi-coloured hues of dark green and pink (Douglas Building's 2019 *Heritage Report and Paint Analysis* by Stuart Stark & Associates estimates between 1970 to 1991, page 4).

These multi-coloured palettes are not original to either building, and it clearly states in the Stuart Stark & Associates report that, in the case of the Douglas Building, do not reflect the original intent of the architect and what the building should look like. This conclusion can also be applied to the BC

Power Commission Building, as can the determination that the mural is not in keeping with the visual and architectural intent of the building design, detracts from the building's ability to project clean geometric playfulness and solidity that relies on sunlight and shade to effectively communicate its late Art Deco style. For this reason, it is recommended that the mural applied in 1994 be painted over during the repainting of the entire building to its near original colours. With no indication of a maintenance agreement and considering the normal life span for a mural is usually 10 - 20 years, restoring the architectural aesthetic of the 70-year-old building without the mural reapplied would respect Henry Whittaker's original design intent.



Figure 22: Wildlife Diversity Mural, North Entrance

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<http://rickthomasart.blogspot.com/>
- Wong, Hugo; Internal Communications, Corporate Initiatives Division | Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, Victoria BC. 2020. History of the BC Power Commission Building. Telephone Interview by Lauren Martin, July 24, 2020.

Appendix A.1



Richard Carr House

THE HALLMARK SOCIETY

Dedicated to Preserving Historic and Architectural Landmarks
in the Capital Regional District

Telephone 382-4755

FAX: 592-4999

June 11, 1992

FAXED

British Columbia Buildings Corporation
ATTN: Mr. John Williams
914-B Yates Street
Victoria, B.C.
V8V 1T8

Dear Mr. Williams:

RE: Ministry of Environment, Lands & Parks Building – 780 Blanshard

It has come to the attention of the Hallmark Society that alterations are planned for the above-captioned building, and the Society, with 1500 members, would like to make its concerns known.

780 Blanshard Street is a distinctive structure, on its pivotal site overlooking the Legislative precinct and the Humboldt Valley. It is also a recognized landmark of Moderne design, having received a top rating in the Capital Regional District Inventory of Art Deco & Moderne Buildings, by Don Luxton, published by the Hallmark Society.

Mr. Luxton gives 780 Blanshard a 5-star rating, the highest possible, and says that it is "one of the best buildings of this period in the province," with excellent exterior detailing and its interior fittings virtually intact, especially in the public areas. The light fixtures, door frames, washrooms and, especially the conference room are worthy of note. Mr. Luxton also stated that this building is "recommended for retention under any circumstances".

Any changes or alterations to 780 Blanshard should be done very carefully to preserve the original ambience of the building and to enhance, rather than disguise its architectural merits. Members of the Hallmark Society executive would be pleased to meet with you at any time to discuss plans for 780 Blanshard.

Please feel free to contact our President, Stuart Stark, at 592-8662, or Vice-President, Pamela Madoff, at 384-6971 if we can provide any assistance.

Yours truly,

Ken Sudhues
Secretary

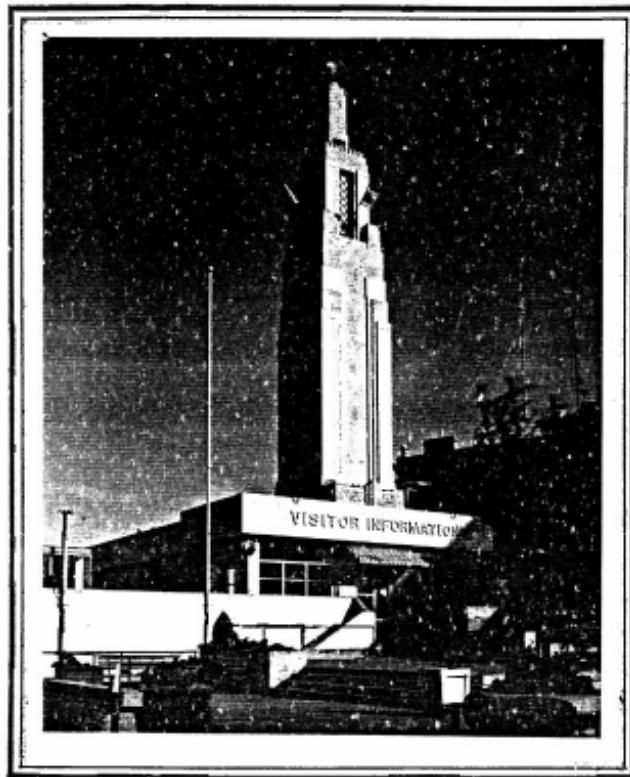
FAXED

cc. Hon. Lois Boone
Bill Clark, BCBC

Hon. John Cashore
Colin Campbell, Heritage Conservation

#118 - 1216 Broad Street, Victoria, B.C. V8W 2A5

CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT



ART DECO AND MODERNE

SURVEY RATING SYSTEM

This survey was intended to identify the extent and range of buildings in the Art Deco and Moderne styles in the Capital Regional District. Every building in the City of Victoria and the Municipality of Esquimalt was examined, and major streets examined elsewhere in the District. Many additional buildings were located through addresses being provided from various sources, and then checked in the field.

Each building listed is identified, when possible, by its most recent name, and its architect or designer is given, if known. If there is a range of dates shown for the building, for example, 1945-1947, the first date indicates the start of design and the final date shows completion of construction. Dates are sometimes unavailable due to some areas not requiring building permits at the time of construction, lost records, or in some cases, the building being moved and original records discarded.

Each building is rated on a scale that indicates a judgement as to how valuable the building is as an example of the Art Deco or Moderne style.

- ***** Excellent example; highest possible recommendation for retention under any circumstances.

- **** Very Good example; retention is highly recommended.

- *** Good example: retention is advised but is relative to context.

- ** Fair Example; retention not dependent on stylistic considerations.

- * Poor example: retention questionable.

These assessments are made on the basis of the existing condition of the structure. An overall judgement is also made as to the condition of the building fabric, either excellent, very good, good, fair or poor. These judgements are from a visual survey only and each building would need to be assessed in order to determine structural integrity. Unless otherwise stated, the structure may be assumed to be of frame construction.

This is primarily intended as a stylistic survey, but significant contextual groupings have been noted, especially the Old Esquimalt Road cluster, Esquimalt, and the Denison Road

Turner, and built by the Pollard Construction Company. The planning is clear and simple, with stores at ground level and residences above. It is an excellent example of the new styles that emerged right after the War; a reliance on abstracted form and a lack of applied decoration. The planar walls are obviously influenced by the International Style. A full set of plans are available in City Plumbing Records (#11575).

***** MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT (Department of Public Works, H. Whittaker, Chief Architect, 1949-1950)
780 Blanshard Street

A very late example of Art Deco. Excellent use is made of an irregular, sloping site to bury the mass of the building from the north side; it rises to four stories at its highest point. Originally designed as a hospital building, but never used as such. Its first use was as the British Columbia Power Commission Building, (whose incised signage is still visible on the north facade.) The structure and exterior walls are poured concrete; ornamentation is derived from bands and panels of zig-zag geometrics that are carried across the building and even around the retaining walls. There is a consistent use of stylistic motifs that unifies the bulky mass of the building and intensifies its formalistic nature. Each elevation is different, with the main (north) entrance being on the third floor due to the sloping site. Especially worthy of note is the stair tower on the west side, with tall corrugated glass windows that run up an interior stairwell; in the divisions between the stairs there is a bent aluminum screen that runs up three stories that incorporates frozen fountain motifs as well as the B.C.P. initials worked into octagonal insets. The ceiling banding in this stairwell is a triple horizontal aluminum section. The third floor entrance lobby is an excellent example of a vernacular adaption of Art Deco, with flush wood panelling and columns and covings that show interpretations of classical elements and an overall richness of detail and finish. The interior fittings are virtually intact, especially in the public spaces; light fixtures, doorways and washrooms remain in their original condition. Of particular interest is the Conference Room, originally the Chairman's Office, which was the site of the Columbia River Treaty Signing. This room is striking for its use of inlaid wood, and indicates the taste of the period for "blond" unstained wood panelling. Built-in filing cabinets ring one end of this symmetrical, oval space. All interior woodwork was by Crowe Gonnason Company Ltd., Victoria. The building displays excellent detailing both inside and out, and is in very good condition. This is one of the best buildings of this period in the province.

*** COMMERCIAL BUILDING (1937)
1018-1020 Blanshard Street

A one storey stucco-faced double storefront with stepped tower feature over a recessed entry. One of the doors is origi-



B.C. POWER COMMISSION BUILDING
780 BLANSHARD STREET
H. Whittaker, Chief Architect,
Provincial Department of Public Works, 1939-1940

Dramatic use is made of this steeply sloping site by opening the entries at different levels throughout. Concrete is used for the cladding, decorated with cast-in-place low-relief relief ornament. The building also has many surviving interior details, including an aluminum stairwell screen, three storeys high, with the B.C.P. initials worked in. The conference room, originally the Chairman's Office, was the site of the signing of the Columbia River Treaty signing.

Appendix A.3

The redacted Statement of Significance (SoS) was issued by John O'Reilly, Senior Heritage Planner, City of Victoria, on August 8, 2019. As shown on the following page, the SoS was revised due to an error in the construction completion date, and an invalid reference to the building's initial use as a hospital. Current research undertaken by CDS Inc. did not obtain any evidence that the building was initially constructed for use as a hospital.



780 Blanshard Street
BC Power Commission
Other Names



Statement of Significance

Description of Historic Place

The BC Power Commission is a large Art Deco Style office building located at the edge of the Humboldt Valley in downtown Victoria. Built on a slope, it has two visible storeys on its northern façade and four storeys facing south.

Heritage Value

The BC Power Commission building is valuable to the City of Victoria because of its distinctive architectural design, and for its connection with the public sector enterprise that helped shape British Columbia's waterpower industry.

~~Although this building was completed in 1940 for use as a hospital, its first function was~~
This building was completed in 1949¹ as the headquarters of the BC Power Commission, which was created by the provincial government in 1945. Although it is a fairly late expression of the Art Deco Style, its fine architectural composition is integral to its heritage role within the urban core of Victoria's downtown. Its geometric form and ornamentation provide a significant counterpoint to the typically Victorian nineteenth-

¹ SOS information altered on August 8, 2019 by John O'Reilly- Senior Planner- Heritage. Building Permit records indicate that the building was constructed in 1949.

century architecture of nearby landmarks such as St. Ann's Academy, and communicate a sense of modernity well-suited to its original function as the control center for the electrification of the province in the mid-twentieth century.

The history of continuous public-sector use of this building supports the heritage of Victoria's role as a centre of government since the late nineteenth century. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that this building was the location of the signing of the Columbia River Treaty in 1961.

Character-Defining Elements

The character-defining elements of the BC Power Commission building include:

- Its location on the edge of the Humboldt Valley.
- Its four-storey flat-roofed form and geometric massing.
- Its architectural composition, designed to accommodate its sloping lot and to accentuate the height of its southern façade.
- Evidence of its association with the BC Power Commission, seen in such interior elements as the three-storey-high aluminum stairwell screen with the initials "B.C.P", and such exterior elements as incised signage on the north façade.
- All surviving Art Deco detailing relevant to its 1940 design.
- Surviving interior fittings and fixtures related to its original design.
- The original spatial configurations, fittings, and detailing of the Conference Room (originally the Chairman's Office).

Appendix A.4

The following biography of architect, Henry Whittaker, is sourced from the Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada 1800 - 1950 at www.dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org.

Please note that the dates of Whittaker's appointments to Acting Supervising Architect and Chief Architect are incorrect. Whittaker was promoted to Acting Supervising Architect in 1917-18, to Supervising Architect in 1918-19, and to Chief Architect in 1928-29.

As shown in the Public Works 1949-50 fiscal year report, Henry Whittaker was also succeeded by C.D. Campbell and not Guy S. Ford, as incorrectly shown in the biography.

The biography also provides a list of all buildings he designed for the British Columbia Department of Public Works.

Biographical Dictionary of ARCHITECTS IN CANADA 1800 - 1950

Introduction
Appendix

Sources & Methodology

Abbreviations

Acknowledgements

Browse by Search by Keyword:

Whittaker, Henry

WHITTAKER, Henry (1885-1971) was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 15 May 1885 where his father was a cotton manufacturer. His family moved to England and he articulated there with J. Perry at Dudley, Engl., with Haywood & Harrison of Accrington, and with the architectural department of Waring & Gillow in London. In 1905-10 he lived and worked in Port Sudan, Khartoum and at Wad Medani as an architectural assistant to the government of the Sudan. He returned to England in 1911 and emigrated to Canada in early 1913. On 3 May 1913 he was appointed as assistant in the drafting department of the British Columbia Public Works Dept. in Victoria. In April 1919 he was promoted to Acting Supervising Architect and attained the position of Chief Architect for the province in 1919, holding that post for the next thirty years. His early designs for public buildings were modest and conservative variants of the Tudor Revival style with characteristic English half-timber framing, but he later adopted a more progressive Art Deco style by the mid-1930's. One of his department's best works from the period was the Power Commission Building in Victoria (1938-39). Whittaker retired as Chief Architect for the British Columbia Government on 30 June 1949 and was succeeded by **Guy S. Ford**. He continued to practise privately after that time, in partnership with Donald Wagg, advising on plans for several hospitals in the province. He retired in 1954 and died in Victoria on 18 August 1971 (death notice *Daily Colonist* [Victoria], 10 Aug. 1971, 26; biog. *Daily Colonist* [Victoria], 16 July 1949, 3; D. Luxton, *Building the West: The Early Architects of British Columbia*, 2003, 428-30, 524; inf. *Architectural Inst. of British Columbia*). A photographic portrait of Whittaker was published in the *Daily Commercial News* [Toronto], 15 Dec. 1936, 1.

BUILDINGS FOR THE B.C. DEPT. OF PUBLIC WORKS

ABBOTSFORD, B.C., Matsqui Elementary School, 1913 (D. Franklin, *Early School Architecture in British Columbia*, 1980, 48, illus.)

(attributed) MERRITT, B.C., Provincial Government Building, 1914 (dwgs. BCPA)

(attributed) NICOLA, B.C., Provincial Government Building, 1914 (dwgs. BCPA)

VANCOUVER, B.C., prototype for War Veteran's housing, Windsor Street, South Vancouver, 1919 (H. Kalman, *Exploring Vancouver*, 1993, 203, illus.)

OWENS FALLS, B.C., Court House, 1919-20 (Parks Canada, *Canadian Inventory of*

Historic Buildings, Manuscript Report No. 288, 63)

ESSONDALE, B.C., Industrial Home, 1920; Nurse's Home and nine cottages, 1920; Acute Care Patients wing, 1922-23; mental hospital, 1927; Staff Quarters, 1928; Soldier's Infirmary, 1930; Admission Unit, 1946; Clinic for Psychological Medicine, 1949 (C.R., xxxiv, 21 Jan. 1920, 48, t.c.; 16 June 1920, 51; xlii, 11 Jan. 1928, 50; 25 July 1928, 61, t.c.; xlv, 5 Feb. 1930, 55; lix, Feb. 1946, 112; Vancouver Daily World, 28 March 1922, 9, descrip.; 11 June 1923, 30, descrip.; Canadian Hospital [Toronto], xxvii, March 1950, 30-4, illus. & descrip.)

COURTENAY, B.C., public school, 1920 (C.R., xxxiv, 16 June 1920, 51, t.c.)

KAMLOOPS, B.C., model barn, 1921 (C.R., xxxv, 15 June 1921, 62)

PRINCE RUPERT, B.C., Provincial Court House, Market Place facing McBride Street, designed by **A. Alfred Cox** in 1913, but construction suspended during WWI, and building later completed by Whittaker in 1921-22 (Vancouver Daily World, 26 Oct. 1920, 17; M. Carter, *Early Canadian Court Houses*, 1983, 232)

ARMSTRONG, B.C., public school, 1921 (D. Franklin, *Early School Architecture in British Columbia*, 1980, 31, illus.)

SMITHERS, B.C., Provincial Government Building, 1925 (M. Carter, *Early Canadian Court Houses*, 1983, 233, illus.)

TRANQUILLE, B.C., major addition to the Sanatorium, 1927; central heating plant, 1931; Nurse's Home, 1948 (C.R., xli, 16 Feb. 1927, 47; xlv, 21 Jan. 1931, 49; lxi, Sept. 1948, 130; Nanaimo Free Press, 8 Jan. 1931, 3, descrip. of the Power House)

VANCOUVER, B.C., Children's Home, for the Children's Aid Society, 1928 (C.R., xlii, 25 Jan. 1928, 65)

CHILLIWACK, B.C., public school, 1928 (C.R., xlii, 4 Jan. 1928, 47)

VANCOUVER, B.C., University of British Columbia, gymnasium, 1929 (C.R., xliii, 10 July 1929, 69)

SALMON ARM, B.C., Provincial Government Building, 1929-30 (M. Carter, *Early Canadian Court Houses*, 1983, 233, illus.)

VANCOUVER, B.C., Vancouver General Hospital, Tuberculosis Wing, Willow Street, 1935-36; Nurse's Home, Heather Street, 1937-38; major addition, 1947-48 (C.R., l, 15 Jan. 1936, 42; l, 6 Oct. 1937, 32; lx, Sept. 1947, 174)

KIMBERLY, B.C., Junior High School, 1937 (C.R., l, 21 July 1937, 35)

PRICE RUPERT, B.C., major addition to the General Hospital, 1938 (C.R., li, 9 March 1938, 33)

VANCOUVER, B.C., Motor Vehicle License Office & Testing Garage, West Georgia Street at Bidwell Street, 1938 (C.R., li, 13 July 1938, 36; dwgs. Vancouver City Archives)

CRESTON, B.C., public school, 1938 (C.R., li, 27 July 1938, 118)

POWELL RIVER, B.C., Provincial Government Building, 1939-39 (inf. Gordon Fulton, Ottawa)

KELOWNA, B.C., major addition to the hospital, 1939 (C.R., lii, 13 Dept. 1939, 28)

VICTORIA, B.C., Mount Mary Roman Catholic Hospital, Burdett Street near Vancouver Street, 1940 (40 (M. Segger & D. Franklin, *Exploring Victoria's Architecture*, 1996, 198, illus.)

VICTORIA, B.C., major addition of the Richmond Pavilion for the Royal Jubilee Hospital, Richmond Avenue at Fort Street, 1944-46; Maternity Pavilion, 1946 (C.R., lvii, 28 June 1944, 29, t.c.; Canadian Hospital, xxiii, Dec. 1946, 28-30, illus. & descrip.; 40; M. Segger

& D. Franklin, *Exploring Victoria's Architecture*, 1996, 199, illus.)
NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C., major addition to Royal Columbia Hospital, Columbia Street at Sherbrooke Street, 1944 (C.R., lvii, 23 Aug. 1944, 22)
VICTORIA, B.C., St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Hospital, major addition, Collinson Street, 1946 (C.R., lix, Oct. 1946, 92)
PENTICTON, B.C., Provincial Court House, Main Street at Lakeshore Drive, 1948-49 (Penticton Herald, 24 March 1949, 1 & 12; Tim Morawetz, *Art Deco Architecture Across Canada*, 2017, 69, illus. & descrip.)
COURTENAY, B.C., Provincial Government Building, 1949 (C.R., lxii, May 1949, 156)
VICTORIA, B.C., The Douglas Building, Government Street at Superior Street, for the Provincial Government, 1949 (C.R., lxii, July 1949, 136; Victoria Heritage Foundation, *This Old House - Victoria's Heritage Neighbourhoods - Vol. 2*, James Bay, 2018, 130-31, illus. & descrip.)
VICTORIA, B.C., B.C. Electric Power Commission Building, Blanshard Street at Humboldt Street, 1949-51 (Victoria Daily Times, 24 Oct. 1950, 17, illus.; M. Segger & D. Franklin, *Exploring Victoria's Architecture*, 1996, 78-9, illus.; Tim Morawetz, *Art Deco Architecture Across Canada*, 2017, 68, illus. & descrip.)
NELSON, B.C., Kootenay Lake General Hospital, 1950 (C.R., lxiii, Jan. 1950, 144)
VICTORIA, B.C., Royal Jubilee Hospital, Richmond Avenue at Fort Street, a new Laboratory Building, 1950-51 (Victoria Daily Times, 9 Dec. 1950, 39, t.c.)

Appendix A.5

The following is an overview of the development of the Wildlife Diversity Mural applied to the north entrance of the BC Power Commission Building in 1994 by Victoria artist, Rick Thomas.



23rd June 2013 WILDLIFE DIVERSITY MURAL 780 Blanshard St.,
Victoria BC



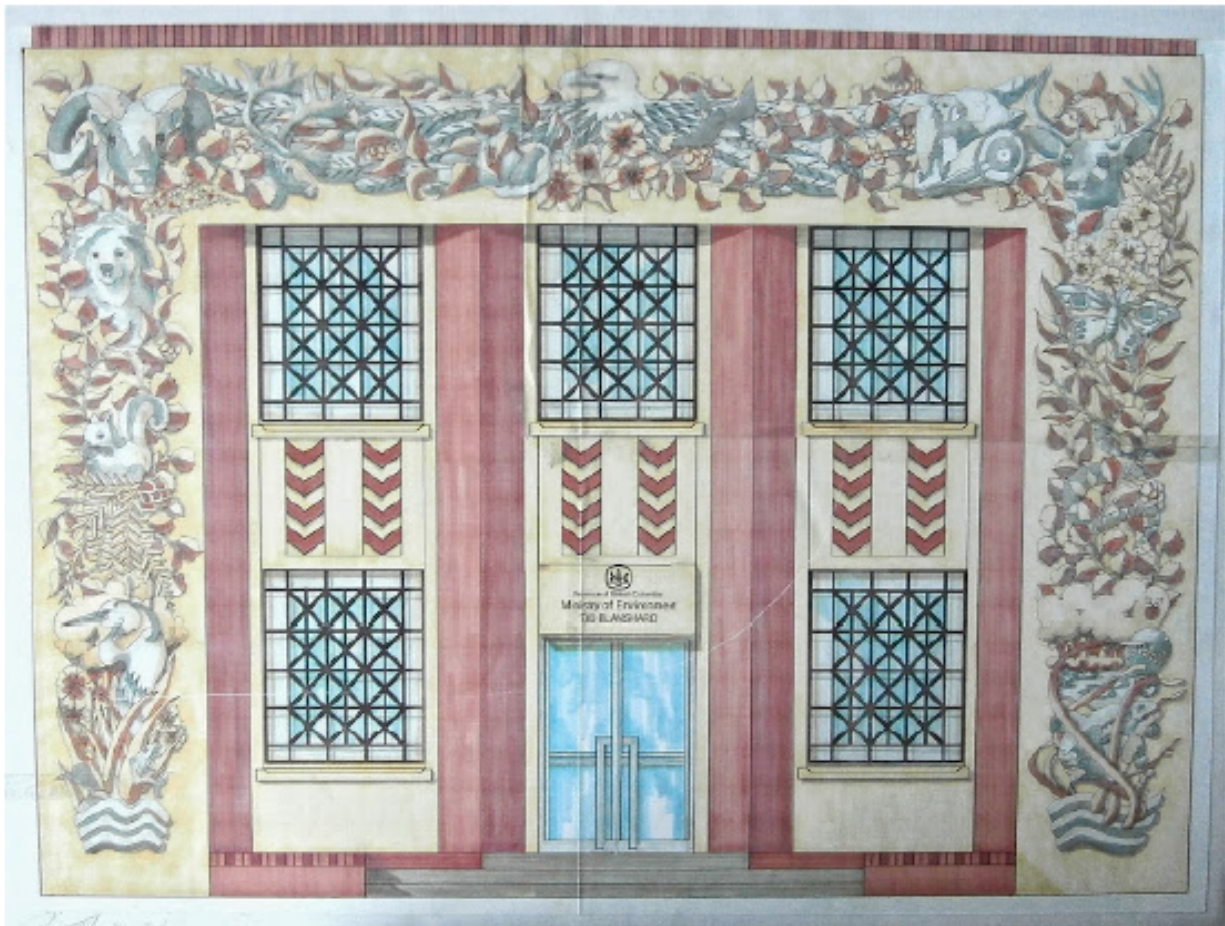
[<http://4.bp.blogspot.com>

[-kvsb9glZe6E/UcelaUE2oVI/AAAAAAAAADqA/saDumIM1Xj4/s1600/mural780blanshard.jpg](http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-kvsb9glZe6E/UcelaUE2oVI/AAAAAAAAADqA/saDumIM1Xj4/s1600/mural780blanshard.jpg)]

From the storage locker: I found the original drawings to do the mural on 780 Blanshard Street, Victoria. I had laid out three 12' preliminary drawings in a cabin on Gordon Beach, West-coast, Vancouver Island (graciously loaned to me by the Deputy Wildlife Branch Director, Bill Monroe. The drawings were photographed by our reprographics department into smaller transparencies so I could work up colour combinations. With this, our group The Big Picture Society (Paul Haley, Liz Williams and others that I can't remember, would raise funding. Nobody would give us

anything. No way was anyone having to do with a civil servant paint a piece of culture on a building, not in this colony. Anyway one of the bosses said to his minions one day, "Get Rick the money." That was it, we were underway.

I gave the presentation renditions and sketches away. What's left will be junked except for the original 12' drawings. They go back in storage for God knows what; I don't have the heart to throw them out. If anyone wants them, call me. I mean it's finished, isn't it? It's all up there on the wall.



[<http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-eQDDER4LL7o/UICaZwJw6CI/AAAAAAAAEDg/fQ4RFWsWXF0/s1600/mural+mockup.jpg>]

It took two weeks on a cherry picker with my assistant, Rick Pawles to paint the mural on the building's front entrance. I took staff members up each day to paint a few strokes. My feet hurt each day from trying to hang onto the cherry picker cage through my shoes. Monkey instinct I guess. That was twenty years ago and the human child, a staff member's new born, is now a grown man. I wonder what he thinks of it today?



[<http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-N2amW0Bw5CQ/UdHYhto2A-I/AAAAAAAAADto/Xqh1rOTxHgo/s1600/muralplans2.jpg>]



[<http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-hxebL8PN27U/UdHYh7j2axI/AAAAAAAAADtw/hV5SxhYyVFg/s1600/muralplans3.jpg>]



[<http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-MxPRRmaZA7k/UdHYnpAAmSI/AAAAAAAAADuA/BWbBDYpsg7Y/s1600/muralplans5.jpg>]



[http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-2Zm_C6mgh00/UdHYneAphBI/AAAAAAAAADt8/5d0E9xTBZ_I/s1600/muralplans4.jpg]



[<http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-lu6laSRS1WE/UdHYpAg2trI/AAAAAAAAADuM/3668dVZgExU/s1600/muralplans6.jpg>]

I read in the Victoria Times Colonist that Frank Lewis had passed away last March. Frank was a tall string-bean of a man, full of smiles and goodwill. He created many pieces of art that brightens our community and it is good to see his 1997 mural below the Victoria Gorge Road Bridge on the Galloping Goose Trail being restored by Lindsey Poepping and Ashley Stewart. His passing makes me aware of my own mortality and the condition of my little effort from 1994 (above). Oh, how time rushes by.

[<http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-kvsb9glZe6E/UcelaUE2oVI/AAAAAAAAADqA/saDumIM1Xj4/s1600/mural780blanshard.jpg>]

Posted 23rd June 2013 by [Rick Thomas](#)

Labels: [artist](#), [artist Rick Thomas](#), [BC Government](#), [ministry of environment](#), [mural](#), [wildlife branch](#)

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Appendix A.6

Based on the outcome of research undertaken for the BC Power Commission Building and the architect, Henry Whittaker, the following Revised Statement of Significance is provided for consideration by the City of Victoria.



780 Blanshard Street, Victoria BC BC Power Commission



Statement of Significance

DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC PLACE

The BC Power Commission is a large Art Deco style office building located at the edge of the Humboldt Valley in downtown Victoria. Built on a slope, it has two visible storeys on its northern façade and four storeys facing south.

HERITAGE VALUE

The BC Power Commission building is valuable to the City of Victoria because of its distinctive architectural design, and for its connection with the public sector enterprise that helped shape British Columbia's waterpower industry.

This historic site was built in 1949-50 and first occupied in January 1951 as the headquarters of the BC Power Commission, which was created by the provincial government in 1945. The building was designed by the BC Public Works Department's Chief Architect, Henry Whittaker, who in 1949 left his position after 36 years of service. Whittaker also served as the First Vice-President of the RAIC in 1936 and served as President of the AIBC in 1935-37. Although Whittaker's design is a fairly late expression of the Art Deco style, the poured concrete building's fine architectural composition is integral to its heritage role within the urban core of Victoria's downtown. Its geometric form and stylistic motifs provide a significant counterpoint to the typically Victorian nineteenth century architecture of nearby landmarks, such as St. Ann's Academy, and communicate a sense of modernity well suited to its original function as the control centre for the electrification of the province in the mid-twentieth century.

The history of continuous public sector use of this building supports Victoria's role as a centre of government since the late nineteenth century. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that this building was the location of the development of the Columbia River Treaty which was signed in 1961.

CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS

The character-defining elements of the BC Power Commission building include:

- Location on the edge of the Humboldt Valley.
- Four-storey flat-roofed form and geometric massing.
- Architectural composition designed to accommodate its sloping lot and to accentuate the height of the southern façade.
- Association with the BC Power Commission as evidenced in such interior elements as the three-storey high aluminum stairwell screen with the initials B.C.P. and such exterior elements as incised signage on the north façade.
- All surviving Art Deco detailing relevant to its 1949 design.
- Surviving interior fittings and fixtures related to its original design.
- Original spatial configurations, fittings, and detailing of the Conference Room (originally the Chairman's Office).

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