

CITY OF COQUITLAM, STATEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE, 2007

MILLSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, 1432 BRUNETTE AVENUE

Description of Historic Place

This historic school is a one-storey wood-frame building with a side-gabled roof, with the original two-room section and front gabled projection facing Brunette Avenue, and paired entryways flanking the front of the building. The 1925 addition to the rear doubled the size of the original building to four rooms, and has a small entry porch to the west. A large new addition is attached to the southwest corner. This is a landmark building in the Maillardville community, located at the corner of Schoolhouse Road and Brunette Avenue.

Heritage Value of Historic Place

The Millside Elementary School is significant as a testimony to the provision of community educational facilities and the development of the local school system, at an early stage in the settlement of Coquitlam. Opened in 1907 as a two-room schoolhouse for primary education up to Grade 7, there has since been a series of additions, beginning with an expansion to four rooms in 1925, that reflect ongoing community growth and development, particularly the expansion and boom of Fraser Mills – at one time the largest lumber mill in the British Empire – beginning in 1908.

The Millside Elementary School is also significant for its ties to the historic Maillardville community, one of the only distinct French-Canadian settlements west of Manitoba. An economic downturn in 1907 led to Anti-Asiatic riots that caused a local labour shortage, and as a result a Roman Catholic priest was hired by Fraser Mills to recruit new workers from lumbering regions in Quebec and Ontario. On September 28, 1909, 110 French Canadians, approximately 40 families, mostly from villages in the Hull and Sherbrooke regions in Quebec and Rockland, Ontario, arrived at the Millside Station. A second group of immigrants arrived the following year. The existing English-speaking Millside Elementary School was one of two attended by Maillardville children, the other being the school and convent at Notre Dame De Lourdes at Laval Square, which was entirely French-speaking.

Furthermore, Millside Elementary School is valued as an example of the standardized architecture that typified educational institutions at this time. The original two-room structure is characterized by its rectangular plan, front bay projection and paired entries, a design provided by the provincial Department of Lands & Works in 1906. This practical and functional design was easy and inexpensive to execute and was notable for its boxy form and separate boys' and girls' entrances on the north side. Typical of mandated school policy, the windows are banked along the east and west sides to allow abundant natural light, leaving sufficient wall space for large blackboards. In 1925, the growing student population necessitated the doubling in size to four classrooms. A much larger new addition has been attached to the school, however the basic scale and massing—and some features such as original wooden windows—remain intact. Significantly, a number of interior features, such as high ceilings, window and door frames, and interior trim also remain intact in the 1907 and 1925 sections. Millside Elementary School has been a community landmark and a key institutional presence for a century.

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Character-Defining Elements

Key elements that define the heritage character of the Millside Elementary School include its:

- landmark location at the corner of Brunette Avenue and Schoolhouse Road
- institutional form, scale and massing as expressed by its one-storey height and side gabled roof with front gabled projection, and separated entryways at north
- wood-frame construction, including details such as crown molding on fascias
- additional exterior details such as a red-brick internal chimney
- windows, including some original double-hung 2-over-2 wooden sash windows
- interior details such as high ceilings, wooden window and door frames and wooden trim
- grassed area and plantings such as mature holly bush to the north



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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
RESEARCH SUMMARY SHEET**

CIVIC ADDRESS: 1432 Brunette Avenue

ORIGINAL OWNER: Coquitlam School Board (Assumed)

CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1906-07

SOURCE: BC Archives, GR-0054-4-99, Plan, 1906

ARCHITECT: Provincial Department of Land & Works (Architect)

SOURCE: BC Archives, GR-0054-4-99, Plan, 1906

BUILDER: J. Albert Ferbrache (contractor)

SOURCE: BC Archives, GR-0054-4-99, Signed Contract/Specifications, 1906

REFERENCES:

- **Assessment Book Information:** 1913: School Roll #1068 Land Value \$400 1 acre of land
1915: School Roll # 1320 Land Value \$320 1 acre of land

OTHER REFERENCES:

- *Coquitlam: 100 Years: Reflections of the Past.* Coquitlam: District of Coquitlam, 1990.
- Foundation Group Designs Ltd. *Heritage Maillardville: Building Inventory.* Coquitlam: District of Coquitlam, 1986.
- Luxton, Donald. *Building the West: the Early Architects of British Columbia.* Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2003.
- Monk, H.A.J and John Stewart. *A History of Coquitlam and Fraser Mills 1858-1958.* New Westminster: Jackson, 1958.
- Stewart, John. "Early Days at Fraser Mills, From 1889-1912," Unpublished manuscript, n.d., 29.

COMMENTS:

Proposed for closure, 2007.