

Historic Neighbourhood's Crown Jewel—1558 Beach Drive



View of mansion today



How mansion would look, restored

Solid and imposing, the mansion has good bones and is worthy of restoration. Houses of this era were made of wood from old growth forests—premium lumber, without a knot in sight.

“THERE IS A STRONG cultural heritage in Oak Bay which is greatly valued by its residents. Key heritage aspects of Oak Bay include the street-scapes and neighbourhoods, historic buildings and structures, cultural and natural landscape features, and history.” —Oak Bay Community Plan



Photo c. 1913. PABC 94386

The mansion is not alone. Other homes were built nearby, most still standing today. Many are designated or worthy of designation. Please help us preserve Oak Bay's architectural heritage, thereby securing the goodwill of current and future residents and tourists alike.



1558 Beach Drive, from Prospect Place, 1986

Brother architects Percy Leonard James and Douglas James designed this lavish 10,000 square foot mansion, which was built for \$25,000 in 1912. The cost per foot was nearly double that of most other homes of the period. The exterior of the home features split granite veneering up to the second floor on two sides. Shingles and half-timbering make up the rest of the exterior cladding. The interior features include oak paneling in the hall, staircase, and dining room. Oak flooring was installed, along with ten fireplaces, five WCs, and three bathtubs. A large amount of stained glass was installed, with the most beautiful on the Prospect Place facade. John W. Morris was president of the Wood Motor Co., Ltd. (offices on Broughton Street).

—Adapted from *Oak Bay's Heritage Buildings: More Than Just Bricks and Boards* by Stuart Stark

Humorous Historical Snapshot—1915

Oak Bay Police Log Book P.R. 3.2

1915/08/16, page 29, File Number 408

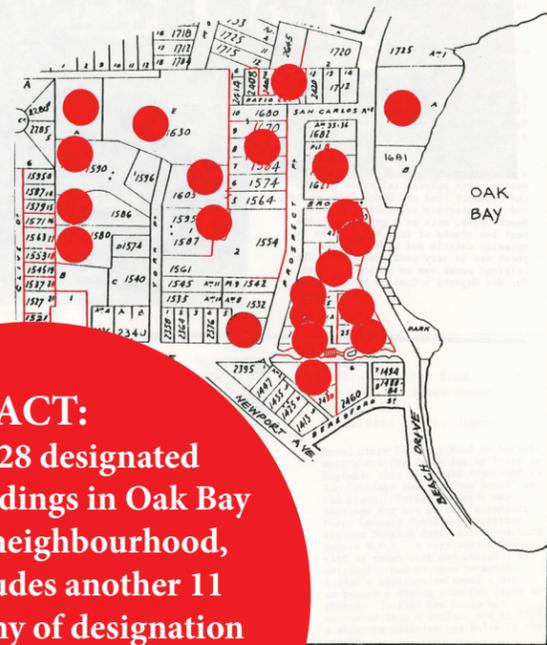
Complaint: J.W. Morris, Beach Drive & Prospect Street, complains of [a carriage tour service] making an unnecessary noise while driving past his residence and passing uncomplimentary remarks, some of which are: “The Wise man from the East,” “Made his money from Ford cars,” and “The Jitney Bas Incubator.”

Action Taken: [Carriage tour service] warned. Constables to note and report anything out of the ordinary which they may hear said by “Spielers” while driving through the district.

York Place, Prospect Place, Beach Drive Cluster

Source: Stuart Stark's book, *Oak Bay's Heritage Buildings: More Than Just Bricks and Boards*

Red dots indicate homes of historic significance in the area



FACT:
11 of the 28 designated heritage buildings in Oak Bay are in this neighbourhood, which includes another 11 homes worthy of designation

(Source: *Oak Bay's Heritage Buildings: More Than Just Bricks and Boards* by Stuart Stark)