

# The Prospect

## Your Historic Neighbourhood Newsletter

York Place, Prospect Place, San Carlos Avenue, Broom Road, and part of Beach Drive and Oak Bay Avenue



Who designed the greatest number of historic homes in the neighbourhood: Samuel Maclure or Karl B. Spurgin?

Circa 1912



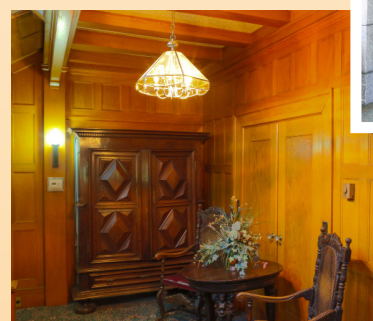
Private Collection



**The J.W. Morris House, aka “Garden Mansions,”** though it’s had some alterations since 1912, still exists with its stone walls, capped pillars, garage and front garden — 107 years later — for all to enjoy.



**FOR OVER A CENTURY,** the community has enjoyed its view of 1558 Beach Drive. As a crown jewel of Oak Bay’s first Heritage Conservation Area, it stands as one of the last remaining Beach Drive mansions with its historic front garden still in existence. It provides the public with a glimpse of Oak Bay’s early evolution and how important front gardens were to many early residents.



### Photos:

View of ocean from Morris House; original oak doors at porte-cochère entry; oak paneling inside foyer; stained glass panel (above)



Gazebo (circa 1929–1930), 1897 “Coach House” or Carriage House in background, woman is Margaret (Scott) Crane



Circa 1934

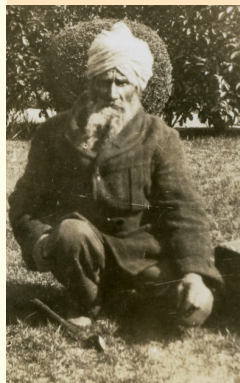
## Our Heritage Conservation Area **SOCIAL HISTORY:**

### **ANNANDALE STORY** By Brian A. Crane

Adapted from Brian Crane’s Nov. 2018 letter to Mayor and Council, and continued from the prior newsletter. Brian’s grandparents, Robert and Elizabeth Scott, lived at *Annan-dale* while he and his parents lived in the house they built on the *Annan-dale* property from approximately 1928–1949.

The main entrance to the Scott property was by the drive off York Place, past a magnificent laurel hedge, by the old Coach House and then, swinging to the left, to the big house. The Coach House was always part of the *Annan-dale* property. The ground floor was used for Granny’s car, which in my time was a 1930 Auburn Cabriolet (with a rumble seat). Up a flight of wooden stairs lived their gardener, Bir Singh, who had been hired (just before WWI, I think) by Robert Scott (my grandfather), who brought him home from a ship which had anchored in Sooke Harbour. Bir Singh took me under his wing, and I learned a few words of Urdu when I was growing up. On the ocean side of the Coach House, flush with the wood siding, grew an enormous peach tree which was still producing fruit when I was a child. The Crane House was surrounded by huge cedars and cherry trees as well as apple and pear. My father Harry Crane was a great gardener. For many years he served as Land Registrar and Inspector of Legal Offices in the provincial government. He studied law in Vancouver after he had returned from service with the R.C.N.V.R. in the Irish Sea.

Photo of Bir Singh



Bir Singh, late 1930s

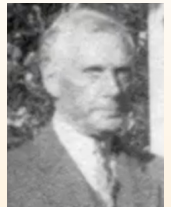


Circa late 1930s

**BRIAN A. CRANE as a young lad  
on the Carriage Drive,**  
1897 Carriage House in the background

### **ANSWER TO THE QUESTION ON THE COVER:**

Architect Karl Spurgin designed seven houses in The Prospect Heritage Conservation Area (HCA). Samuel Maclure comes in close second with six.



### **ARCHITECT KARL SPURGIN**

Karl Branwhite Spurgin (1877–1936) was born in Maryport, Cumberland, England, and entered the office of J. Walton Taylor, FRIBA at Newcastle-on-Tyne, at age 17, to serve a five year apprenticeship. At age 34, Spurgin emigrated to Canada and settled in Victoria, B.C. (Spurgin will be featured in the next newsletter.)

### **PHOTO CREDITS:**

Scott photos: Oak Bay Archives (thank you, Brian Crane) Front page colour images: Ian Robertson

NOTE: Funding for neighbourhood newsletters, posters and flyers comes from enthusiastic neighbours.

For more information,  
visit [ProtectOakBayHeritage.ca](http://ProtectOakBayHeritage.ca)

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