

Silverhill Hall
31016 Silverhill Avenue
Mission, British Columbia

Description

Silverhill Hall is a modest and rustic wooden structure with a simple gable roof. It is located on Silverhill Avenue, surrounded by trees, about 8 Kilometres west of Mission, British Columbia.

Heritage Values

Silverhill Hall is important for its historic and cultural values.

Historic:

Constructed in 1919 on land donated by Silva Lowe, the Hall was built by and for the Swedish immigrant community that had settled in the Mission area in the early 1900s. It is a physical representation of a tight-knit community that valued its social interactions, and in particular the desire to continue its familiar traditions and ways of life.

The Hall was built using a functional rectangular design with a peaked gable roof. The material consists of logs from nearby Ruskin Mill and from other local properties and was hand hewn using the skills and technique the men had learned in Sweden.

The original building material is still visible and in good condition. The building remained the same until the 1960s, when a kitchen was added and the wooden roof was replaced by metal. The addition follows the same design elements of the oldest portion of the building by using horizontal wood planks. It is clearly different from the original, respecting it without trying to imitate it.

Cultural:

The greatest heritage value of the Hall lies in its cultural importance. It is a physical reminder of a group of immigrants which settled in the area nearly 100 years ago, which valued its traditions and yet embraced its new country and neighbours. Further, it represents the spirit and determination of a group of people to settle in an undeveloped land in order to make a better life for themselves and their children.

This is evident by the fact that all of the land, logs and labour were donated for the construction of the Hall and that this generosity continues three generations later. In addition, the continued neighbourhood pride in the community is evident through the retention of the name "Silverhill" for this distinct neighbourhood, even though it has a Mission postal code.

The Hall was officially opened in 1919 on Mid-Summer's Day, an important Swedish celebration. Since its opening, the Hall has been a place for teas, dances, parties, meetings, rummage sales, sport team practices, 4H Club meetings, and other activities, including casual get-togethers. There has always been a Board, with a Social Committee and a Recreation Committee. Members of the Hall often entered their produce and crafts in local fall fairs. Sports teams and dance groups often competed and won local competitions. It has held a Mother's Day Tea annually for over 60 years and an annual Fall tea for over 50 years. The Hall was, and continues to be, a source of community pride.

The success of having the Hall designated as a municipal heritage site is due primarily to resident Sonja Barker, who was the social convener of the Hall and chair of the group's heritage committee. Her actions show the continued value that the Hall has for the people in the community.

Character-defining Elements

- Location on a lot nestled in the woods and next to Silverhill Avenue
- Simple design
- Gable roof
- Hand hewn lumber construction
- Exposed construction techniques
- Differentiation of new construction/addition from the original