

**FRASER MILLS MANAGER'S RESIDENCE  
1120 BRUNETTE AVENUE**

**Description of Historic Place**

The Fraser Mills Manager's Residence is a one and one-half story wood-frame residence, located on historic King Edward Avenue at the corner of Brunette Avenue. It faces Mackin House, flanking the original northern entry to Fraser Mills—at one time the largest lumber mill in the British Empire. This residence has a unique roof configuration, with a gambrel roof and cross-gambrels at each end. A very large modern addition has been added to the rear of the original residence to accommodate a community arts and music facility, known as Place des Arts.

**Heritage Value of Historic Place**

The Fraser Mills Manager's Residence was built in response to a major expansion of Fraser Mills undertaken between 1907 and 1908. It is valued as a testament to the success of Fraser Mills, and also for its ties to the French-Canadian settlement of Maillardville. Completed by 1908 as the residence for the Manager of the Fraser River Sawmills, it was situated at the original entry to Millside, the company town built to the north of the mill. Established in 1889, the mill initially suffered as its target market was foreign trade, which required the use of large ships to transport wood products. The Fraser River channel was too shallow to accommodate these vessels, and the mill—unable to compete with mills located on deep-sea ports—was forced to shut down. The river was finally dredged in 1905 and the mill resumed production in 1906. Its success was immediate and it could not keep pace with orders, but lacked funds for expansion. The following year the mill was bought by an investment syndicate based in the United States, which provided the capital necessary to upgrade equipment and expand the mill operations.

The Fraser Mills Manager's Residence, along with a host of new buildings and amenities, was built during the major expansion of Fraser Mills, which also required the construction of new accommodation for workers at this remote location. 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 French-speaking settlers founded the community of Maillardville in close vicinity to Fraser Mills, on pay-by-the-month lots supplied by the company. The Manager's residence was built for the most senior manager at the mill and was viewed as 'prestige housing' within the Millside and Maillardville communities. The Manager's Residence faced the Mackin Residence—another house built for a manager—across King Edward Street and marked the northern entrance to the mill town. The last manager vacated the residence in 1956, and in 1961 it was converted to an RCMP headquarters. The building is currently used as a community arts and music centre.

The Fraser Mills Manager's Residence is also significant for its association with longtime Fraser Mills management, the Mackin and Ryan families. The original resident of the Manager's residence was Mr. W.S. Rogers, his wife, and their son, Roy. In 1914, Henry James Mackin (1885-1958) was promoted to Mill Manager and moved with his wife Mary Elizabeth Mackin (nee

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Wilson) from the Mackin Residence across the street into the Manager's residence. Tom Ryan was Manager from 1931 to his retirement in 1936 and his son, Maurice Ryan, moved into the Mackin Residence in early 1931 when he was promoted to Assistant Mill Superintendent. Maurice moved into this residence in 1944 and stayed until his retirement in 1951.

The building is also valued for its distinctive architecture. The building displays a unique example of a cross-gambrel roof and the look of the building harkens to a Colonial influence popular in the eastern United States. This Colonial influence reflects the Mill's American ownership.

### **Character-Defining Elements**

Key elements that define the heritage character of the Fraser Mills Manager's Residence include its:

- orientation facing the Mackin Residence across King Edward Street
- residential form, scale and massing of the 1908 residence as expressed by its one and one-half storey height (with full basement), symmetrical plan with a central front entry, and gambrel roof with cross-gambrels at each end
- wood-frame construction with wide lapped wooden siding on the ground floor and cedar shingles above
- additional exterior details such as scroll-cut, scalloped bargeboards
- fenestration such as multi-paned double-hung and casement wooden sash windows, and original decorative semi-circular windows in the attic
- landscape features such as a mature Japanese Maple, large rows of deciduous trees at the property line and a large holly tree at the northwest corner of the residence



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**FRASER MILLS MANAGER'S RESIDENCE, 1120 BRUNETTE AVENUE  
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE  
RESEARCH SUMMARY SHEET**

**CIVIC ADDRESS:** 1120 Brunette Avenue

**CURRENT NAME:** Place des Arts

**CONSTRUCTION DATE:** 1907-1908

**SOURCE:** see comments

**ORIGINAL OWNER:** Fraser Mills

**SOURCE:** British Columbian, June 20, 1908

**REFERENCES:**

- **Maps:** Map 2624 subdivided Nov. 1912
- **Directories:**
- **Vital Events:** BC Archives, Death Certificate: Henry James Mackin (1885-1958), Reg. Number: 1958-09-014162
- **Assessment Book Information:** 1913: Canadian Western Lumber Company Ltd., Roll #1075 Land Value \$800, No agreement holder 1915: Canadian Western Lumber Company Ltd., Roll #1327 Land Value \$640, No agreement holder

**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.
- 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.

**PHOTOS:** BC Archives, Historical Photo # B-08383

**COMMENTS:**

According to information, the Fraser Mills Manager's Residence was built for Fraser River Sawmills no later than 1908.