

Port Coquitlam City Hall
2580 Shaughnessy Street
Port Coquitlam, BC

Description:

Port Coquitlam City Hall is located in Downtown Port Coquitlam at 2580 Shaughnessy Street and sits on the northeast corner of the City Hall precinct. The original portion of City Hall is a three storey, reinforced concrete building with brick and simulated stone facades and a protruding central bay with former entry porch. A modern three storey addition to the rear was added in 1988 and is distinguished and divided from the original building by a three-storey atrium that acts as the new entry.



Heritage Value:

Port Coquitlam City Hall is important for its historic, aesthetic and cultural significance.

Constructed in 1914, the Hall has **historic significance** for its age, its association with key civic events and people, as well as for its direct link to the incorporation of Port Coquitlam as a city.

At nearly one hundred years old at the writing of this statement, City Hall is valued for its continued use as a City Hall and the significant role it continues to play in the lives of Port Coquitlam residents. It is a physical link to the City's incorporation in 1913, when it separated from the City of Coquitlam and changed its name from Westminster Junction to Port Coquitlam.

City Hall also has a connection to the history of the local First Nations people of the Kwayhquiltum Nation, who lived in the area for at least part of the year to fish, hunt and gather food and supplies. This connection has been further solidified through archeological digs at the foot of Pitt River Road that have resulted in fishing weights, basketry pieces, tools and other items being found and preserved.

City Hall is symbolically linked to the City's pioneer history, dating back to 1853, when the McLean family became the first European settlers in the area. It is also connected to significant times in Port Coquitlam's history; for example, its growth as a result of the railway, its inclusion as part of the incorporation of the District Municipality of Coquitlam in 1891, and its incorporation as the City of Coquitlam in 1913.

City Hall is also associated with important people and events. George Black, a Scotsman from Granville (Vancouver) who opened Vancouver's first butcher shop and who was the first to import racehorses, donated the land for Port Coquitlam's City Hall and for the first school site too. Some key pioneers associated with City Hall are: James Mars (first Mayor of Port Coquitlam), his brother Arthur Mars (later Mayor), Charles Davies (local contractor for City Hall, alderman and mayor), G. Roy Leigh (first Assessor and Collector), plus many more.

Also associated with City Hall is Parr, MacKenzie & Day architects from Vancouver, who designed the original portion of the Hall. This architectural firm is best known for its association with John Edmeston Parr (1856-1923), who was formally of Parr & Fee, a well-known and prolific firm in Vancouver. Examples of Parr's earlier work include the Fee Block, the Malkin Co. Warehouse, the Dunsmuir Hotel, the Vancouver Block and Glen Brae (all of Vancouver).

More recent associations include Carlberg Jackson Architects, who designed the renovations in 1960, and Toby Russell Buckwell & Partners Architects, who designed the atrium and addition in 1988.

The Hall has **aesthetic significance** for its style and design, material and workmanship, and for its setting.

City Hall was designed using the Edwardian style of architecture, popular at the time for its representation of sophistication, elegance and solidity. It was a style that in 1914 showed the world confidence in the future. The Edwardian design is evident in the original building from its symmetrical composition and three distinct horizontal elements, (base with rough cast cement, middle with brick, and top with heavy cornice and truncated hip roof). The Edwardian design elements are also evident through the building's projecting central bay and former entry porch, and through the double-hung windows in groups of 2 or 3, framed by fine cut stone surrounds.

The 1988 renovation, that doubled the size of the building and reoriented the entry to the west side through a glazed atrium, is important for its sympathetic design that respects the original building by referencing its material and proportions, yet remains clearly modern.

The material and workmanship of the 1914 portion of the building is important for being of heavy timber construction with load bearing masonry exterior walls that used brick from Nanaimo and Veronastone (simulated stone) from the Hynes Stone and Staff Company in Port Coquitlam. The building is also important for its workmanship by local construction firm C.S. Davies and local plumbing firm, Coquitlam Hardware. Mr. Davies is also important for constructing the Commercial Hotel in 1912, and for being City Alderman for 20 years and then the City's seventh mayor for 10 years.

The Hall has **cultural significance** for its strong ties to the community, as well as for its symbolic and sentimental values.

City Hall represents Port Coquitlam as a City. The building was constructed quickly after incorporation using a style of architecture and in a size that proclaimed confidence and a promise of future prosperity. The solid massing of the building and the use of sound materials resulted in a building that was both perceptually and literally substantial.

The site of City Hall has mirrored the growth of the City through its own development. As time progressed, the Hall became surrounded by businesses and by other public buildings, such as the library, the Parks Building, Post Office and a medical building. Leigh Square, an open patch of grass, was redesigned and given a band shell, thus ensuring its prominence in the revitalized civic precinct that now includes the City Hall Annex, the Archives and community space, and the Gathering Space.

Also key is the adjacent Veterans' Park and its cenotaph, dedicated November 11, 1923 and relocated here on November 7, 1968 from McMitchell Park. The Cenotaph gives tribute to fallen soldiers and is the focus of Remembrance Day ceremonies. In addition, a plaque honouring Port Coquitlam's Terry Fox is located beside the original portion of City Hall as a National Historic Site.

City Hall is also important as a touchstone for the community, for times of remembrance and historically during difficult times. For example, during both world wars, a room was set aside in the Hall where women met daily to roll bandages, knit socks and put together packages for soldiers overseas. [Other ex?]

For all of these reasons, City Hall is a symbol of civic independence, community spirit and perseverance.

Character-defining Elements:

Siting, Context and Landscape Qualities

- location in heart of Port Coquitlam
- context within a low-scale 'main-street' commercial core
- orientation to the street
- relatively flat lot
- relationship to other civic buildings
- open space of Veterans' Park with clear view of the cenotaph
- pathways and movement of pedestrians through the site
- Terry Fox Historic Monument

Landscape Elements

- mature trees and shrubs, including ornamental cherry trees, dogwood, magnolia and a tulip tree
- perennial beds
- open seating areas for the enjoyment of visitors and employees

Architectural Qualities

- overall massing and Edwardian style of original portion of building
- overall massing and simplified Edwardian style of modern portion of the building
- clear distinction between old and new parts of the building through use of central glazed atrium and simplified version of original design

Architectural Elements – original building:

- symmetrical composition
- three storey height, with lowest level partially below grade
- projecting central bay and former entry porch with columns
- double-hung windows in groups of 2 or 3 and framed by fine cut stone surrounds
- three distinct horizontal elements, (base finished in rough cast cement, middle finished in brick, and top with heavy cornice and truncated hip roof)
- extensive use of brick from Nanaimo and its decorative pattern on the middle section of the building
- Veronastone
- cast pattern in Veronastone frieze
- bars on lower windows from time when jail was located there
- glazed atrium which forms the new entrance
- view of brick of what was the rear of the City Hall, now visible inside the atrium space

Architectural Elements – 1988 building:

- symmetrical composition
- three storey height adjacent to atrium, then stepping back
- narrow, vertical punched single windows framed by simple cut stone surrounds
- three distinct horizontal elements, (base finished in smooth cast cement, middle finished in brick, and top with simple cornice), all of which respect but do not mimic the original building
- glazed atrium which forms the new entrance