

October 11, 2009

FROM: Bowen Island Heritage Preservation Association

RE: OCP Update

First, thank-you for the invitation and the opportunity to present our view, as a volunteer organization on Bowen, of the future of Bowen as reflected in our O.C.P. The constitution of the Bowen Island Heritage Preservation Association has as its purposes, in part:

- a) To study heritage sites on Bowen Island and where possible to assist in the preservation of these sites;
- b) to undertake public educational projects in furtherance of the purposes of the society....

We have been working since 1990 primarily with the preservation of the Union Steamship cottages and the heritage fruit trees in Davies Orchard in Snug Cove. We have also been working for several years on the development of a heritage inventory, a list of sites with known heritage value.

The existing OCP makes several references to our Heritage and we will refer you to those sections, with suggestions for improvements to reflect what has happened since the last revision and highlights of what we would like to see happen in the near future. The page numbers we have included are referenced to the OCP available currently on the BIM website.

The most extensive mention of heritage in the existing OCP is section 5.3 “Heritage Resources” [p.136]. That section begins with the statement:

Heritage consists of both landscape and the human imprint upon it. For the community, heritage means a sense of place and a sense of continuity, providing identity through connection with the past. Heritage is stewardship and is not only a gift to us, but is something which, when valued by the community, we are obliged to pass on. Bowen’s heritage evolves from its archeological values, especially from its native heritage; its historic buildings and sites, and its natural

and cultural landscape.

That section continues with language and ideas that we still support wholeheartedly and we would like the same or very similar wording in such a section of the next OCP. In addition, our group has created a list of heritage sites on Bowen that we believe should be attached to the OCP and we would like very much to see the immediate establishment of a Community Heritage Commission [section 5.3.3] so that such a list could be attached to the next OCP. The creation of a list of sites of heritage value is also mentioned in section 1.4(d) [p.3] under “Review and Further Studies”. We expect the discussion in the community will focus on the effect of section 8 [p.151] of the existing OCP re: “Heritage Alteration Permits” and the extent of interference with private property rights. We would welcome and encourage that debate, primarily because most of the sites we have considered priorities would be willing and agreeable exceptions.

In section 2.1 of the OCP, titled “Background”, there is a general description of our history, both ancient and recent, which forms the basis of our group’s interests. We have a unique and fascinating history with landscapes, buildings and people’s stories that are easily accessible. These images and realities remind us regularly of our rich past and add depth to our everyday. They are all important and deserving of more exposure and hence the educational component of our work and the work of the Bowen Island Historians with whom we frequently partner for projects. They collect and protect archival material while our focus is on trying to preserve heritage sites. Our work and interests often overlap which also adds to the richness of the experience of the community.

The parts of the OCP that we think need some additional mention of heritage values refer primarily to the Snug Cove Village area. Our dream for the future of the Village is its development as a “heritage precinct”. First, we ask you to imagine walking from the lagoon and causeway, past the seaside cottages and then the boulevard cottage and the

Old General Store. You would likely cross the road to the Cenotaph and then continue either along the boardwalk to the Davies Heritage Orchard and the baseball diamond or the festival field, or up the road past the cottages and buildings that form the heart of our village on the south side, with the open space and forested trails beckoning from the north side of the road. The architecture and spacing is small with huge natural boundaries (trees, ocean, mountains). The area is “snug”, contained and self-sufficient with an emphasis on the size of a human. It also happens to be welcoming and friendly, perhaps quaint in that regard. Whatever the labels in many ways it works. The added feature of vehicular and ferry traffic is a dissonance and complication that we have more or less adjusted to [our 10 minutes of rush “hour” on a defined schedule] but continues to baffle resolution. Our members all have opinions and ideas but that issue is not our main focus.

If Snug Cove is to be revitalized as a “destination” for residents and visitors we believe an essential component of the success of such revitalization is with a respectful emphasis [not merely a theme but a pride] in the heritage values that are evident and we believe the backbone that will support the area. With that emphasis in mind, we note there is virtually no mention or hint of heritage in any of the descriptions of Snug Cove Village. In section 2.3 of the OCP [p.9] in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> bullet under the heading “Broad Objectives” there are two objectives concerning the village which are further developed in the Snug Cove Village Plan that was attached to the OCP in 2005. With reference to the specific sections of the OCP of relevance to the village [Section 2: Planning Context] [p.18] there is no mention of Section 5.3: Heritage Resources. We consider this a significant oversight that needs attention.

In the Snug Cove Plan there is also reference to the Land Use Bylaw [p.19] describing the variety of zoning considerations within the area. Metro Parks has recently received rezoning for the Davies Heritage Orchard cottages to include tourist accomodation.

BIHPA has been a major partner with Metro Parks in negotiating and preparing for this rezoning in an effort to finance the restoration of the remaining cottages and we consider this to be an important commercial development for Snug Cove with a strong heritage component. We would hope that all the buildings in the Cove would be similarly protected for their heritage values.

Section 3.0 of the Snug Cove Plan is titled “Vision Statement and Guiding Principles”[p. 21]. In section 3.1: Vision Statement [p.21] there is no mention of heritage values or sites of significance that may attract heritage protection, unless “respects the arts and crafts character of the area” in the second paragraph has that intention. In our opinion that latter statement is insufficient to meet our concerns. There is one brief mention of heritage in Section 3.2: Guiding Principles [p.22]. The last bullet under the sub-heading of “Environment” states “respect the heritage character of the Cove”. With respect, “respect” is not strong enough. We believe a guiding principle for Snug Cove planning, particularly considering the importance of heritage buildings and sites in the area, should be the much stronger “preserve and protect... the unique amenities and environment...” from the Islands Trust Act [Section 2.1 (1)][p.8]. Even the remote possibility of the damage and demolition of an existing site is of concern. If such formed part of a development proposal we would want the matter thoroughly researched and considered before and not after an event.

We agree with the motivation under section 4.1.2: Commercial Development [p.23] that the “lower Cove should be revitalized to enhance the gateway to the community” but again in the policies which follow that statement there is no mention of heritage values. The statement (i) [p.24] under “Commercial Development Policies” “Ensure that commercial development adjacent to Crippen Regional Park respects the ambience and character of the Park” is perhaps confusing given the undeveloped areas on the north side of the road and Davies Heritage Orchard cottages on the south side.

Section 4.1.4 concerns Community/ Civic Development Policies and under that heading there is mention in statement (e) [p.28] of the Old General Store and the Boulevard Cottage and their development as community facilities. We hope that will be in the context and mindful of their heritage value but there is no mention of that context or value in the policy statement under development as community facilities. There may be some confusion on this point however because there is specific reference to the heritage value of those two buildings in the next section describing Crippen Regional Park [see 4.4.3 ( c); p.31].

Section 4.4 of the Snug Cove Plan [p.30] refers to Crippen Regional Park and statement (b) under section 4.4.3: Policies [p.31] specifically refers to the Davies orchard and cottages. While we might tinker with the wording, discriminating slightly between the landscape overall, the old and new trees, and the existing and potential for new cottages we think this statement is a good example of how other sections of the OCP might be strengthened.

Finally, there is an aspect of life on Bowen that gets little enough appreciation, in our opinion. When roads are narrow and winding, perhaps with a leafy canopy, they can add appreciably to the ambience we think our community should aspire to. We recognize that there will necessarily have to be some accommodation to the ever-larger emergency vehicles which all of us appreciate, plus public transportation vehicles and road-clearing in winter. However, we would very much want the existing heritage designation on roads [see section 4.1.10 (p.114) and section 5.3.6 (p.137)] to remain. The safety of pedestrians, especially children, bicycle and horse riders, skateboarders and (other) wildlife should be the priority consideration and if we can accomplish that with the demands of the non-motorized population sharing narrow roads we believe that is far preferable to widening

roads for the same reasons but less effect.

Sincerely,

Daphne Shaw,

Vice-President of Bowen Island Heritage Preservation Association.