



## Golden Sikh Temple

603 13 Street South, Golden, British Columbia, Canada

**Formally Recognized: 2020/02/07**

## Other Name(s)

n/a

## Links and documents

[Province of BC Historic Places website](#)

## Construction Date(s)

**Listed on the Canadian Register: 2021/02/26**

## Statement of Significance

## Description of Historic Place

The historic place is the former site of the Golden Sikh Temple, originally located on the property of the Columbia River Lumber Company, now 9th Avenue, in the town of Golden, B.C.

## Heritage Value

The former site of the Golden Sikh Temple has historic, cultural, social and spiritual value, particularly for its association with early Sikh pioneers and their contribution to B.C.'s forestry industry.

The former site of the Golden Sikh Temple, one of the earliest temples established in the province, is valued as

a reminder of the hard work and tenacity of the first South Asian pioneers who arrived in 1902 from India's Punjab region to work in the province's forest and lumber milling industries in very remote mountain communities such as Golden.

The temple offered the South Asian community a place to practice their faith, socialize with others in their community, and receive the spiritual and emotional support needed to endure the shared experience of racism and discrimination of the time.

The temple is important for its association to the Columbia River Lumber Company and the role of South Asian immigrant workers who helped fill the need for manual labour in the province's resource industries in the early 20th century. Likely a re-purposed sawmill building, the gurdwara, or Sikh temple, was located on company property among the bunkhouses that accommodated the South Asian work force.

The gurdwara was so central to South Asian community life that Sikhs have established these temples wherever they have lived and worked. In order to meet the needs of their South Asian workers, it was common for mill owners to build or accommodate gurdwaras within the mill grounds, establishing a sense of the village life of the mill's South Asian employees.

Despite its non-traditional structure, the Golden Sikh Temple is important because it accommodated all Sikh religious beliefs and practices. The interior was finely decorated, with carpets on the floor where worshippers sat, a place for the Guru Granth Sahib, or sacred text and the Nishan Sahib, or Sikh flag, located on the exterior. The temple provided Sikh hospitality to visitors in the langar, or dining area and communal kitchen, a place where a free, vegetarian communal meal was available to all.

While the closure of the lumber company in 1927 after a forest fire led to the dispersal of Golden's early Sikh residents to other B.C. communities, the Golden Sikh Temple site is a reminder of their legacy of settlement, development and culture in B.C.'s Kootenay region.

The former temple site is significant for generating awareness about Golden's South Asian Canadian community. This community has sought to educate citizens and visitors about their history and culture through initiatives such as museum exhibits and a provincial stop of interest sign that was installed in 2015. These endeavours assist in the recognition of the story of Golden's Sikh pioneers as one of hard work and determination, and highlights an important chapter in the rich history of the city and region.

### **Character-Defining Elements**

N/A

### **Recognition**

### **Jurisdiction**

British Columbia

### **Recognition Authority**

Province of British Columbia

**Recognition Statute**

Heritage Conservation Act, s.18

**Recognition Type**

Provincially Recognized Heritage Site (Recognized)

**Recognition Date**

2020/02/07

**Historical Information**

**Significant Date(s)**

n/a

**Theme - Category and Type**

Building Social and Community Life

Religious Institutions

Peopling the Land

Migration and Immigration

Peopling the Land

Settlement

**Function - Category and Type**

**Current**

**Historic**

Religion, Ritual and Funeral

Religious Facility or Place of Worship

**Architect / Designer**

n/a

**Builder**

n/a

**Additional Information****Location of Supporting Documentation**

Province of British Columbia, Heritage Branch

**Cross-Reference to Collection****Fed/Prov/Terr Identifier**

EhQf-21

**Status**

Published

**Related Places**

n/a