



Kapoor

Sooke River Road, Sooke, 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)

1928/01/01 to 0001/01/01

Listed on the Canadian Register: 2021/02/19

Statement of Significance

Description of Historic Place

The historic place is the former site of the Kapoor Lumber Company sawmill, located at near Sooke Lake at Mile-35 on the Canadian National Railway line at the point where the Canadian National Railway tracks cross Council Creek. The site falls within the Greater Victoria, B.C. watershed near the Kapoor family woodlot and Kapoor Regional Park at Leechtown and is located within the Capital Regional District.

Heritage Value

The historic sawmilling site of Kapoor has historic, cultural, social and scientific value because it illustrates the ubiquity and enterprise of South Asian Canadians in the lumber industry in B.C., and their cultural and economic contributions to the province.

Established in 1928, the site of the Kapoor Lumber Company operation has historic and cultural value for its economic contribution to the lumber industry in B.C. and for its association with well-known B.C. forestry entrepreneurs Kapoor Singh Siddoo and his associate Mayo Singh, director and founder respectively, of the 1917 Mayo Lumber Company. Building on the company's success with its mill at Paldi, Kapoor and Mayo purchased timber lands near Sooke Lake, northwest of Victoria on Vancouver Island. The railway logging operation and sawmill that became the Kapoor site is important as a testament to the success of Kapoor, Mayo and other South Asians in B.C.'s lumber industry.

Typical of lumber work camps of the time, the workers lived in culturally segregated bunkhouses in a mill town that grew up adjacent to the CNR railway line. Both the town and railway station were officially named Kapoor. Operating at a time when finding employment was difficult for South Asian immigrants primarily due to economic depression - 1928 to 1940 - the mill was an important source of employment, housing and support for up to 300 European, Canadian, South Asian, Chinese and Japanese Canadian workers.

Both the Kapoor Lumber Company and Kapoor Singh Siddoo are important to the South Asian Canadian immigrant community, particularly in relation to Sikh immigration history in B.C. Arriving in the province in 1912, Kapoor Singh Siddoo overcame racial prejudice and legal discrimination to transform himself into a successful lumber entrepreneur, and a central figure in B.C. as a businessman, employer, community leader, and activist. He is also known for respecting and advocating for people of other cultures and their human rights.

As the location of the flourishing Kapoor Lumber Company, the historic place emphasizes Kapoor Singh's successful timber and sawmilling operation, an enterprise significant for helping South Asian immigrants get established through employment and support. It is also valued as a reminder of his work towards achieving full citizenship rights and changes in immigration regulations for South Asian immigrants.

The continued social value of the site is reflected in the creation of the charitable Kapoor Singh Siddoo Foundation, and in the Kapoor family's donation of part of Kapoor Singh Siddoo's timber holdings near the original sawmill site to create Kapoor Regional Park in 1999. Located near the former gold mining community of Leechtown, the park is dedicated to "pioneer lumberman and visionary, Kapoor Singh Siddoo, 1885-1964."

While no standing structures remain, the Kapoor sawmill site has scientific and educational value for the mining and logging artifacts - saw blades, locomotive boiler, concrete foundations and remnants of the logging railway - present in the area which, along with the second-growth forest on Kapoor Singh Siddoo's original timber lands, are tangible evidence and a testament to the industry that once flourished in these woods.

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

Developing Economies

Extraction and Production

Peopling the Land

Migration and Immigration

Function - Category and Type**Current****Historic**

Industry

Wood and/or Paper Manufacturing Facility

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**

DdRw-16

Status

Published

Related Places

n/a