



Tod Inlet

Brentwood Bay, 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)

1904/01/01 to 0001/01/01

Listed on the Canadian Register: 2021/02/19

Statement of Significance

Description of Historic Place

The remains of the former community of Tod Inlet are situated within the boundaries of Gowlland-Tod Provincial Park in the municipalities of Saanich and Central Saanich on southern Vancouver Island, British Columbia. The area is south of the community of Brentwood Bay, bounded on the north by Interurban Road and on the west by Benvenuto Avenue.

Tod Inlet includes the remains of a cement plant that was the reason for the settlement's existence, remnants of worker housing, concrete building foundations and scattered artifacts left by workers at the former cement

plant, all becoming overgrown by the encroaching forest. The remains of wooden wharf pilings are still visible in the water of the inlet.

Heritage Value

Tod Inlet has historic, cultural, scientific, social and spiritual values associated with the operation of the Vancouver Portland Cement Company and the South Asian and other ethnically diverse workers who lived and worked at the plant.

Established in 1904, Tod Inlet has historic and cultural value for being the workplace and communal living space for forty Sikh men, undocumented through official records, who arrived in 1906 to work at the Vancouver Portland Cement Company near Victoria, B.C.'s first cement plant.

It is significant that this group of men worked at the cement plant, because this type of work was a rare choice at a time when most South Asian immigrants gravitated to the lumber, sawmill and agricultural industries. Notably, when the Sikh workers left Tod Inlet approximately five years later, they relocated to places such as Vancouver Island, Golden, Ocean Falls and other forest-based communities to work as loggers and in the province's sawmills.

Established at a time of restrictive immigration policies, particularly the "Continuous Journey" legislation of 1908 that obstructed South Asian immigration, Tod Inlet is culturally significant today because it was a multi-racial community and workplace for South Asian Canadian, Chinese Canadians, and First Nations employees. It was part of a segregated community that also included white engineers, managers and plant workers and their families.

Tod Inlet also has historic and cultural value as an illustration of the typical living and working conditions in South Asian Canadian worker communities at B.C.'s industrial sites, including the bunkhouses and temporary quarters that were a common fixture in B.C.'s early workplaces. South Asian Canadian workers often lived communally, with four to six men in each bunkhouse and meals eaten in one large building.

Tod Inlet has historic value for representing the sacrifice many South Asian workers made on early work sites in B.C., often for lower pay than their European counterparts. The site saw industrial accidents and deaths from hard labour in the limestone quarries, in the cement plant, and in loading bags of cement on to ships for transport, as well as from diseases such as typhus and tuberculosis.

Tod Inlet has spiritual value as a place where South Asian Canadians practiced their own religious rituals when their fellow workers died in the course of their work. There is evidence that one of the earliest Sikh cremation ceremonies in B.C. took place at Tod Inlet.

Tod Inlet has historic and scientific value as the site of the first cement factory on the west coast and its associated limestone quarry and clay mining site. The cement manufacturing process and its transportation patterns are seen in the physical arrangement of the remains of the plant, wharf, and other historic resources on the site.

The remains of structures and artifacts on the site have scientific value for industrial archaeological investigations because the site is protected within the provincial park. The site has the potential to reveal more information about Tod Inlet's former residents and ways of life.

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

Mineral Products 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

DdRu-163

Status

Published

Related Places

n/a