<u>PIERO FERRONATO</u>

November 24, 2020

Councilor Colleen Jordan Chair and Members of the Community Heritage Commission 4949 Canada Way Burnaby, B.C. V5G 1M2

Re: <u>3698 Douglas Rd. - 1) Hilltop Grocery and 2) Douglas Rd. Street Improvements</u>

1) <u>Hilltop Grocery</u>

As proud residents and owners of "Cunningham House", the heritage home at 3555 Douglas Road, I would like to respectfully suggest and recommend on behalf of my family that the above-captioned property, "Hilltop Grocery" be considered for addition to the Heritage Inventory. We would hope that the present new owner would be receptive to this and that the City can work with the ownership to find a feasible manner in which the original building can be revitalized and maintained in some manner for the benefit of the neighbourhood and Burnaby at large.

We understand the store building may date back to as far as 1912 and feel it to be an important part of our history, and one of the few remaining buildings (other than our home and that at 5558 Laurel St.) on the street which harken back to the time when Douglas Road was such a significant route, as part of the travel between Vancouver-Burnaby-New Westminster, and as we understand, one of Burnaby's first roads (more on this below).

As part of the history of green grocery and corner stores in Burnaby, we can imagine our home's original residents frequenting the grocery, which was of great interest to our children when they were younger and we would tell them to imagine what the area used to look like. We feel this could be something taught to the children at nearby Douglas Road Elementary (itself a historic building) as well. They might be curious to know a bit about the history that so closely surrounds them.

In this case there is an important part of our collective story to preserve, when one thinks of how this store, like many others, were opened in the 1910s/1920s by live-in proprietors as neighbourhood grocery stores, eventually replaced in many cases by Chinese Canadian immigrant families as was the case here. They are now so scarce that it would be wonderful to retain one like this.

2) Douglas Rd. - "Heritiage Road" - Designation and Improvements

Finally and in a somewhat similar vein, we would <u>also</u> like to take this opportunity to ask that the Commission consider pursuing some sort of special designation for Douglas Road in the course of planning of the upgrades which are slated to happen in the next year or two. As you may know, Douglas Road is set for substantial updates, including widening, urban trail extension and connection, sidewalk, roadworks, curb and gutter, street lighting, and street trees/boulevard, in a project extending from Canada Way to Still Creek (Chris Whitlock, Engineering Department / Chris.Whitlock@burnaby.ca)

Being one of Burnaby's first and most important early roadways (together with North Road as we understand it?), we would like to ask that the Commission pursue some form of special 'heritage road' designation for Douglas. We believe there are precedents for this in other local municipalities, but not sure whether there are any in Burnaby. They would be a wonderful addition to the works of your Commission.

In this regard, we are envisioning things like distinct 'Heritage Road' signage markers, period-styled streetlighting (we have seen similar and can send photos) perhaps occasionally with banner flags attached, interpretive 'monuments' along the trail with historic photos (we have seen pictures of what the forested area used to look like, and of those who worked on it, as well as some of the homes and other landmarks along the way – these are fascinating to ponder and imagine). Even the street trees could likely be chosen in some 'period-correct' way if desired.

We and the neighbourhood would very much like to celebrate the history of our area and its role in Burnaby in the execution of these civic improvements. I have attached some excerpts of information I found in this regard on Burnaby's website.

Thank you so much for your consideration of these suggestions and recommendations. We greatly appreciate your taking the time to give some thought to these, and trusting that this request be distributed to the Commission in advance of their next meeting.

Yours truly,

Piero Ferronato

c.c. Lisa Cod, Heritage Planner lisa.cod@burnaby.ca

Outline of Burnaby History

JUBILEE NUMBER 1952

GREEN

Water for their domestic use came up the hill in pails. Wild fruits were plentiful in season—the running blackberry, the gooseberry and the black currant, but no glass fruit jars as we know them were to be had. But the pioneers were ingenious, and necessity became the mother of invention. Discarded gin bottles were by no means scarce, and these were utilised not alone by the Holmes family but by almost every family. An iron ring, perhaps two inches in diameter, made by the local blacksmith of half-inch iron and with handle attached was a common household article. The ring, being heated, was placed over each bottle and allowed to rest there for a short time; the bottle being then immersed in cold water at once lost its head. One heating of the ring was sufficient to decapitate six or eight bottles.

A limited amount of paraffine wax was available, and this was mixed with pitch or resin from the forest trees, to form a seal. These seals were used from year to year, and augmented with additional pitch as it became possible. Another use for these bottles, especially those of clear glass was to set them in between the logs in time of building, bottom inward so as to form miniature windows.

It was under these conditions that the first Burnaby family of eight lived in the one-roomed log cabin beside the Brunette. Mr. Holmes had received his title for his land on March 5th, 1860. The first Colonial Land Act was dated January 4, 1860. His land was Lot 1 in Block 1, New Westminster District. A very economical way of increasing a purchaser's holding was to just move the stakes which were supposed to bound the property, and it was considered that night-time was the best time for this proceeding. Judge Matthew Baillie Begbie had bought a property near that of Mr. Holmes, and under date of May 2, 1860, only four months after the passing of the original Land Act, he wrote to Moody, the Chief Commissioner of Lands that "being informed at the time of sale that there was no map of authority covering the property, I did what any prudent purchaser of property was bound to do, I went and examined the stakes". By the time he wrote this letter he had found that these stakes had been moved, and he declined absolutely to receive the deed. His property was Lot 16, next to the Holmes property.

In December of 1863, the daughter, Jane Holmes, thought to have been the eldest of the family of children, married Charles Studdert Finlaison, then 46 years old. Miss Holmes was 18. They at once came to live beside the Douglas Road which was then opened in a crude way for vehicular traffic perhaps a little beyond Deer Creek westward. The Finlaison home was a log cabin built on a two-acre clearing on the west bank of Deer Creek, and on the south side of the Douglas Road. Deer Creek formed the eastern boundary of their holding. From the end of this "road", there extended farther on toward the Inlet for about a mile, at that time, a forest path to the pre-emption of John French. Mr. French's claim was described as being Lot 75. It was beside Still Creek, where today the vegetable gardens are, near the Douglas Road inter-urban tram-station. His entry is dated September 23, 1860.

On October 8, 1864, Colonel John Thomas Scott⁷ of New Westminster contracted to open the Douglas Road to the Inlet, slashing and piling but not burning all timber from a roadway 00 feet wide, for \$1,800.00 a mile, or \$14,700.00. His time limit was to be February 4, 1865. Still Creek was to be spanned by a bridge 60 feet long, but when it was necessary to cross the stream the whole flat north of it was under water, and he, from necessity built a low bridge across the whole flat, a distance of 1,188 feet. The season was extremely wet and the weather severe. When the choppers reached the locality of present day Delta Avenue, they could not find the blazed trees with which the surveyors had marked out the proposed right-of-way, and much time was lost. Mr. Scott sub-let the last three and a-half miles. The work was not finished until May 13, 1865. It had cost him \$26,575.00.

Before this date, there were four other passages cut through the surrounding forest leading out from "the city". Three of these were mere paths not even fit for a horse and rider to pass along with ease, but the North Road was opened before this the whole way to the Inlet.

⁷British Columbian, New Westminster, Oct. 10, 1864.

Sergeant John MacMurphy with a crew of Royal Engineers or "sappers" had cut a rough waggon road three-fourths of the way, and from the end of this, a narrow path had reached the Inlet by August of 1859. An incipient war with the United States was even then brewing over the ownership of San Juan Island, and Moody had learned that the Fraser River frequently froze over, completely closing navigation. The North Road was a military necessity.

At the end of the first week of August, orders came to the road gang to stack their axes and saws, and shoulder their rifles, and they sailed away on the auxiliary steamer, the *Plumper*, capable of rushing to the scene of war at the rate of six knots an hour. There they remained confronting the enemy camp where 60 American soldiers had already established a military landing. Remaining there for a few days only, Moody, with the consent of Governor Douglas, withdrew his men, returning them to their work in completing the opening of the North Road. Because of the general outlook, Moody had asked that a military block-house to contain cannon, and a storehouse for provisions and ammunition be built without delay at the end of the road then being constructed at Burrard Inlet. That would be at the north-east corner of Burnaby. These military defenses were never built.

Early in that summer of 1859, a woodland path was cut from New Westminster to the lower, or eastern end of Burnaby Lake so that the residents of the city might reach it with ease. It was called a "pleasure path", and was finished by the end of June. Beside it a miner, lately returned from the Cariboo country, built his rude cabin soon after. Because of this, the street later built approximately along the line of the "pleasure path" received the name of Cariboo Road.⁸ The lake had already been named Burnaby Lake, in honour of Moody's private secretary, who was also head of the first office staff in New Westminster. He was Robert Burnaby.⁹

Another narrow path, cut so that an armed force should be able to reach salt water, if the Fraser River should be frozen over, was cut through nine miles of forest to False Creek in 1860. It branched off from the Douglas Road at what is now Fourteenth Avenue, in New Westminster, and passed at or near present-day Edmonds, continuing on and varying little from our Kingsway to about Fourteenth Avenue in Vancouver, thence to the shores of False Creek where today Yukon Street ends. This path was widened sufficiently for the passage of a team in 1872, and eventually became Kingsway.

In 1861, Hugh MacRoberts opened a path from New Westminster, leading in the direction of Eburne, finishing it in 1862. It was nothing more than a bridle path, and riders of horses found it necessary to dismount and lead their horses zig-zag down the sides of deep ravines, across the wet bottoms on narrow rough puncheon crossings and ascend in the same sig-zag manner up the farther slopes. There were no bridges. It is now our Marine Drive.

These, then, were our only paths and roads through the Burnaby woods when, in the Spring of 1865 the Douglas Road was completed. That Spring, Captain Edward Stamp came to Burrard Inlet to build a saw-mill. He was a ship's Captain, and not an experienced saw-mill man. It was June of 1867 before his saw-mill was ready to operate. The Douglas Road had then been in use for more than two years, and the Government had encouraged Stamp in his venture, believing that it would relieve the overplus of idle men then in B. C. His woods foreman, Jeremiah Rogers, turned his attention to the cutting of spars for sailing ships, particularly, at this time. Stamp's requirements were only for saw-logs, which were much more easily obtained than spars, and there were plenty of loggers ready to furnish them. Rogers secured some acreage out in the backwoods of our present-day Burnaby, near New Westminster, and floated his spars down Woolard Creek to the North Arm of the Fraser. His holding was District Lot 96, which extends from Fraser Arm tram-station to MacGregor. The immense stumps there today bear silent testimony to the first logging operations in that part of South Burnaby.

One of the main reasons for the opening of the Douglas Road was to give reasonable access to the settlement afterwards known as Moodyville, where a

*B. C. Electric Employees' Magazine, Volume 7, Number 3. *Green's History of Burnaby, page 10. sawmill had been in continuous operation since 1863. The pretty spot where the road terminated at the Inlet lent itself to the creation of a pleasant rendezvous for the pleasure seeker of the Capital City, and a hotel was built there for his accommodation in 1865. Pleasant flower gardens and shaded walks within the forest, a fine rivulet of splendid water, cold and pure from the eternal shade of the sylvan background, where the timid deer had roamed undisturbed for years in great numbers, a beautiful sandy and gravelly beach beside the salty sea, providing unrivalled bathing facilities, all united in creating a steady flow of travellers along the pioneer road. Two-horse and four-horse stages ran back and forth daily over the winding road, up hill and down dale. A bugle blast announced the approach of one of these stages, a sort of Old Land touch. A telegraph line, from the Capital, traversed the winding road, and was connected with a submarine cable carrying messages over land and sea to the pioneer sawnill on the northern shore.

With the opening of daily travel, the timid denizens of the forest which had made their habitat around the larger lake and fed without molestation or alarm on the luxuriant grasses and mosses around its borders, now sought the more secluded smaller lake well within the forest, which became known as Deer Lake. In 1867 Charles Seymour opened a "road house" beside the stream which carried the overflow waters from one lake to the other. Sportsmen stopped under his roof, and enjoyed magnificent hunting amid the towering giants of fir, cedar and hemlock which hemmed in the quiet waters of the smaller lake.

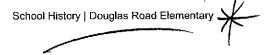
One of the stage drivers made it a custom as he travelled toward New Westminster to halt his horses at the top of the smaller hill just south of Raeside Avenue, ostensibly to "give them a breathing spell", remarking to his passengers, "Well, boys, while we are waiting, I guess we'll collect the fares." Having done so, he stopped again at the foot of the long hill above Burris Street, remarking, "I guess you'll have to walk up the hill." The small hill came to be known as "Chickamin Hill", for in the Chinook language much used by the pioneers, chickamin means money.

It was near the foot of the big hill that on a cold and blustery March morning in 1871, Dr. A. S. W. Black, M.D., ex-M.L.A., met his death by accident. His funeral was the most largely attended of any during pioneer times of New Westminster. The burial was the first in the Fraser View cemetery.

A very sparse settlement lined the Douglas Road until about 1891, when L. Claude Hill and his brother Bernard bought home sites in District No. 79. An acquaintance of theirs, Mr. Nicolai C. Schou, his step-mother and his two sisters, bought and settled near them. Soon, Mr. Schou became the first reeve of Burnaby to be elected by ballot. While Mrs. Schou, the mother, was building, with the help of her daughters and their neighbors, a home for themselves, there arrived from the Fraser Valley a young Englishman to locate near the Hill brothers. He was Charles Frederick Sprott, who assisted the ladies to complete the building of their home, and married one of the daughters. He served on the Burnaby Council under his newly-acquired brother-in-law, Mr. Schou, for nine years as Councillor, and, when Mr. Schou died, he became reeve for the next two years.

It was on the night of June 30, 1892, that, at a meeting of about a score of property owners who had met in the office of Alex Philip, in New Westminster, a resolution "that a municipality to be named Burnaby be formed to embrace all that portion of the District of New Westminster lying between the boundaries of New Westminster and Vancouver and the Fraser River, and any other adjacent parts of the district not included in the existing municipalities surrounding the lands desired to be included in the new corporation", was proposed by N. C. Schou and seconded by John Wiggins. The resolution passed unanimously.

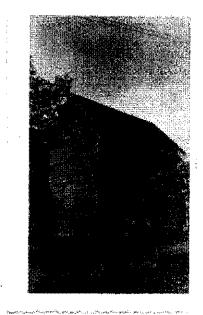
An application to the Provincial Government for the necessary charter was signed by Mr. Schou and W. J. Armstrong, and the charter arrived, directed to the Secretary of the petitioning committee, on Sentember 8th. It provided for the nomination of a council on October 8th, and an election if necessary to be held one week later, October 15th. At the nominating meeting all were elected by acclamation; they were Charles R. Shaw, Reeve; Messrs. L. Claude Hill, William Brenchley. William MacDermott, John Woolard and Arthur DeWindt Haszard as Councillors, who at once elected Alex Philip as Clerk. This council Burnaby's location between Vancouver and New Westminster, ensured that infrastructure came before settlement. The early transportation networks in Burnaby were not designed to serve Burnaby, but to get through Burnaby. Douglas Road, which helped link Vancouver with New Westminster, was constructed by the Royal Engineers from 1862 to 1865. In 1891 a streetcar line was constructed along that route which led to Burnaby's incorporation the following year.



History of Douglas Road School

In 1859, a "picture walk" was opened through the forest from New Westminster to Burnaby Lake. This pathway was widened as it stretched toward Burrard Inlet and became known as Douglas Road.

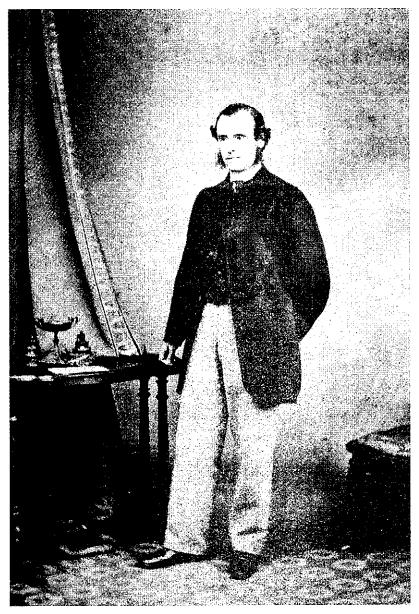
The two-room schoolhouse



Our school, Douglas Road, used to be known as Lakeview School. The two original rooms were built in 1908 and are still in use. It was in 1915 that the name changed to Douglas Road School. The new building, with its brick facing, had four rooms. It was opened in 1928; the principal was Mr. J.A. Scott. Later, the two rooms in the old building were used to teach Arts and Home Economics so that the 250 students enrolled had every opportunity to get a good education.

That's when a military trail going north was built (today's North Road).

"That created the grid for the City of Burnaby," says the historian.



1895: Robert Burnaby was Col. Richard Clement Moody's personal secretary for a brief time. - City of Burnaby Archives

Following North Road was Douglas Road (today's Canada Way), which went from Eighth Street and Columbia straight up into the woods and headed right for the Burnaby Lake valley.

Moody then built what is now Marine Drive in 1862, followed by a trail all the way to English Bay (today's Kingsway). The colonel wanted a 360-degree view of the Lower Mainland, and out to English Bay, to protect New Westminster.