

Cowichan Station Flag Stop

Location: Mile 36 of the E&N Railroad; approximately 145 meters southeast of Koksilah Rd.

Formal Recognition: November 9, 2016

Other Names: Cowichan Station Whistle Stop

Construction Dates: 1950's



Statement of Significance for the Cowichan Station Flag Stop

Description of Historic Place

The railway stop at Cowichan Station was established in 1886 with the northward expansion of the Esquimalt & Nanaimo (E&N) railroad. Local property owner Donald McPherson became the railway foreman and when a station was built, it became "McPherson Station." In 1896, Canada Post asked the community to choose a new name because there was a McPherson post in Nova Scotia. "Cowichan Station" was the new chosen name and the railroad schedules changed to reflect the new name.

A historic photo of the area indicates that the station structure that was originally built is no longer in existence. The current shelter is a small structure erected by the railroad in approximately the 1950's for sheltering railroad passengers waiting for the train. The shelter at the Cowichan Station flag stop is located at mile 36 of the E & N railroad; approximately 145 meters southeast of the stone railroad trestle on Koksilah Road in Cowichan Station.

Until her death, long-time resident of Cowichan Station Mary Haywood would wait for the train every Thursday in era-based dress and hat. The wooden bench beside the shelter was erected in 2011 in Mary's memory.

Heritage Values

The Cowichan Station railroad shelter is a rare tangible reminder and important example on Vancouver Island of the importance of the E&N railroad stations as hubs of commerce and settlement. The utilitarian structure recalls the simple vernacular building traditions, construction materials and small open-space floor area that characterized this building type.

Character-Defining Elements

The station shelter is a small, square, wooden structure with a large arched entry open to the southwest. The exterior is covered with horizontal wood siding painted red with white trim. There is a low-pitched roof of rectangular cedar shingles. The interior consists of wooden slats attached to the wall as benches for seating. White signs with black lettering spelling out "COWICHAN" are perched on the rooflines facing north and south. A white sign with black lettering spelling out "Cowichan Station Founded 1886" sits above the arched entry. Two brick planters flank the arched entryway.



November 11, 1979



December 21, 1988

* Photos courtesy of Robert Hunter and used with his permission