

Cowichan Bay Maritime Centre

Location: 1761 Cowichan Bay Road, Cowichan Bay, BC

Other Names: Cowichan Wooden Boat Society, Cowichan Bay Maritime Museum

Construction Dates: Circa 1930s



Statement of Significance for Cowichan Bay Maritime Centre

Description of Historic Place

The Cowichan Bay Maritime Centre is a large ocean-front converted warehouse and pier, located at 1761 Cowichan Bay Road, in Cowichan Bay, British Columbia. This historic place is specific to the original warehouse and the pier.

Heritage Value

The Cowichan Bay Maritime Centre's heritage value can be found in its educational use and location. This historic place also represents the shift in cultural and economic development of the community. As well, the Cowichan Bay Maritime Centre illustrates the long-term community values of Cowichan Bay.

The old Chevron Oil warehouse is believed to have been built in the 1930s and was abandoned by Chevron in the 1970s. The abandoned quality of the warehouse symbolizes a historic shift in development of the community, as Cowichan Bay's tourism and fishing industry declined. The warehouse's later transition to a maritime centre greatly contributed to the increasing local tourism industry during the 1990s. This warehouse is significant as it provides a historic example of both a slowing local industry and a later upswing in local tourism, two important stages in

Cowichan Bay's growth.

The Cowichan Wooden Boat Society bought the old Chevron Oil warehouse and pier in 1988 and converted the site into the Cowichan Bay Maritime Centre. Since its opening in 1989, the maritime center has continuously provided the community with educational and historical displays, technical courses, and fun community events.

As a community that has thrived from maritime ventures, Cowichan Bay has always valued and highlighted its nautical qualities. The local community members focus highly on maintaining the coastal fishing town character of this small village. The Cowichan Bay Maritime Centre illustrates the important values of the community and heritage value is easily viewed in the center's representation of the character and history of Cowichan Bay.

Character-Defining Elements

Key elements that define the heritage character of the Cowichan Bay Maritime Centre include:

- Use as an educational tool for the community
- Position on original location
- The exterior weathered character and design of the original warehouse
- The unique character of the weathered pier with the Expo'86 pavilions and the B.C. Supercargo Pavilion that is easily recognized as a significant cultural landmark feature in Cowichan Bay

