



Statement of Significance

Red Barn Arts Centre – 1226 Riverside Avenue,
Sicamous

July 2021



INTRODUCTION

Address	1 226 Riverside Avenue
Legal Description	Lot 11, District Lot 452, District Plan 2026, Kamloops Division Yale District
Neighbourhood	Sicamous
Zoning	C-4 (Waterfront Commercial)
Type of Resource	Building; Social-Cultural; Community Hall
Historic Name	Sicamous Community Hall
Current Name	Red Barn Arts Centre
Original Owner	Community Shareholders following donation of land by Mrs. Mary J. Finlayson
Date of Construction	1926
Architect	Not known
Builder	Fred Peters with lumber from R.W. Bruhn Company and lot clearing by community volunteers
Heritage Status	Proposed heritage designation, District of Sicamous

DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC PLACE

The Red Barn Arts Centre is a one-storey, wood-frame, Vernacular style building situated on the west side of Riverside Avenue, between Finlayson Street and Young Crescent, in the central area of Sicamous, BC.

HERITAGE VALUE

The Red Barn Arts Centre, constructed in 1926, is valued for its associations, first, with individuals who were instrumental in the early and on-going development of the community, and second, with the social, cultural, educational, spiritual and economic activities in the community; it is also valued as an example of pioneer vernacular construction.

The Red Barn Arts Centre is significant for its association with persons and groups who, collectively and individually, contributed to the earliest development of Sicamous and its on-going promotion as a growing and vibrant community. This is expressed through the donation of land, and the provision of materials, time and labour for its construction. Each of these factors contributed significantly to construct, maintain and expand the Red Barn to serve the community. It was initially set up as a quasi-public facility, and later as a privately owned venue. In particular, its most notable associations with individuals are with Mrs. Mary J. Finlayson who donated the land, Fred Peters who was responsible for construction and its later expansion following a fire in the early 1950s, and many unnamed volunteers who provided their time, passion and expertise. The example of volunteers is illustrated, in part and collectively, through the Women's Institute. The Red Barn Arts Centre is additionally valued for its association with the Royal Canadian Legion and its service to the community, and most recently with the Eagle Valley Arts Council, who acquired the building in 1986 and has operated here since that date.

The Red Barn Arts Centre is additionally valued for its association with a broad range of activities and uses hosted in and around the building over many decades. It was created out of a need for a building which could host small-scale events of a diverse nature to all members of the community, and represents a facility that met the social, cultural and

educational needs, and occasionally the spiritual needs as well, and which continues to serve in an arts and cultural capacity. This is exemplified by its past use as Sicamous Community Hall, hosting dances, performances, movies, receptions, school events and physical education. It subsequently provided an economic driver for the community, as a mini-mall, and has returned to a use that is more illustrative of its early years, through the Eagle Valley Arts Council which coordinates an array of arts and cultural activities, services and events in Sicamous and beyond.

The Red Barn Arts Centre is additionally valued for its Vernacular style and design. It displays a typical form for a modest mid-1920s village community hall, with its steep-pitch gabled roof, simple decorative elements such as banded shingle cladding in the gable, a full-width porch (subsequently added on) and a variety of wood windows, and a heavy timber beam base. It exemplifies the materials that were readily available at the time, and particularly in this case, donated for the cause, as well as construction methods that allowed work to be done quickly and efficiently by both volunteers and tradespeople.

CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS

The elements that define the heritage character of the Red Barn Arts Centre are its:

- Location on the west side of Riverside Avenue, south of Finlayson Street, in the centre of Sicamous;
- Long-term use as a community facility sponsoring social, cultural, educational and spiritual activities;
- Main floor set slightly above grade;
- Heavy timber beam base set on short timber posts and concrete footings, with wood frame construction above;
- Vernacular style and design elements including a steep-pitch gable roof form, with secondary side-gable extension on north side, shed roof extension at the rear and a narrow shed roof protrusion on the south side, with open soffit and exposed rafter tails;
- Full-width front porch with half-hipped roof with four squared posts and internal angled supporting brackets, a horizontal board balustrade that is fully enclosed on the south side, partially enclosed on the east side, and open to a ramp on the north side, and a wooden floor;
- Partial-width north-side ramped porch with shed roof with horizontal board balustrade and simple squared posts;
- Paired wooden entry doors, with inset glazing and simple trim boards;
- Three secondary single-door entries and a wide double-door entry on the north side;
- Fenestration including a large picture window opening on the front porch, with tall single-set window openings on the south side, and various double hung, and fixed multi-pane wood windows on the north side;
- Alternating bands of wide and narrower cedar shingle cladding in the front gable, and drop siding with pronounced channel on main body of building, with vertical board cladding on the rear extension, and corner boards.

PHOTOGRAPHS, MAPS, PLANS AND PERMITS

Current Photographs – June 2021



Front (East) Elevation



Partial Side (North) Elevation



Front and Partial Side (North) Elevation

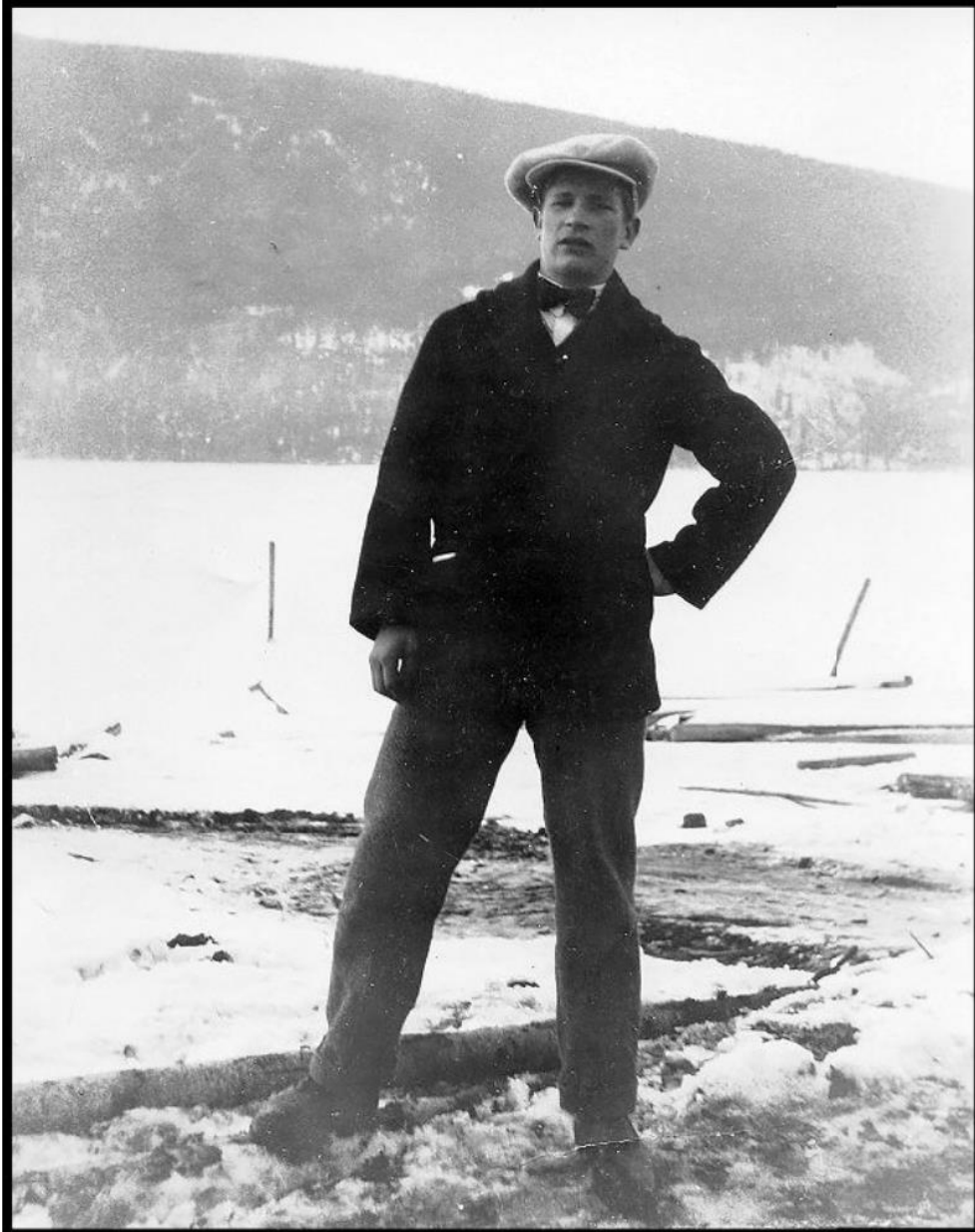


Side (South) Elevation



Example of wood frame and sash windows, north-facing (kitchen extension), and drop siding covering most of the building

Archival Photographs



R.W. Bruhn, Owner of Shuswap Lake Lumber Co., Canoe
Enderby and District Museum and Archives, Local Identifier 138, 1928



Mr. and Mrs. Finlayson and Their Two Sons
Enderby and District Museum and Archives, Local Identifier 1742, 1940



May Pole Dance at Sicamous, c. 1944

Enderby and District Museum and Archives, Local Identifier EDM-3726



Red Barn, 1930. Sicamous and District Museum and Historical Society Photograph Collection SICA_01_RB005



Group at May Celebrations, Sicamous c. 1930. From May Day photograph series: note from back of photo states “May Day by Old Hall/North Side Red Barn”

Sicamous and District Museum and Historical Society Photograph Collection
SICA_01_LO_003



Christmas Concert at Community Hall, 1943. Malakwa Centennial Album 1, page 69.
Sicamous and District Museum and Historical Society Photograph Collection



Red Barn During 1948 Sicamous Flood. Note: photo is backwards
Sicamous and District Museum and Historical Society Photograph Collection
SICA_01_B007



Group Outside the Red Barn, 1975

Note from back of photo: L-R: Maggie Wood, Blanche Finlayson, Alma Peters, Fred Peters, Fay Mabee (Mackie).

Sicamous and District Museum and Historical Society Photograph Collection

SICA_01_RB004



Red Barn Store, 1976. Sicamous and District Museum and Historical Society Photograph Collection SICA-01-RB006

APPENDICIES

1. Research Summary

HISTORIC NAME(S)	Sicamous Community Hall
CURRENT NAME	Red Barn Arts Centre
LEGAL	Lot 11, District Lot 452, District Plan 2026, Kamloops Division Yale District
CIVIC ADDRESS	1226 Riverside Avenue
OTHER ADDRESS	None
ORIGINAL ADDRESS	Same
ORIGINAL OWNER	Community Shareholders following donation of land by Mrs. Mary J. Finlayson
SUBSEQUENT OWNER	Royal Canadian Legion
CONSTRUCTION DATE	1926
SOURCE(S)	Commonly-held community records
ARCHITECT	None noted
BUILDER	Fred Peters with material supplied by R.W. Bruhn Company and community volunteers

REFERENCES:

- District of Sicamous Building Permit: Not available
 - District of Sicamous Water Application: Not available
 - District of Sicamous Plans: Not available
 - District of Sicamous Archives Plans: Not available
 - Maps: Fire Insurance Plans: Not available
 - Directories: Not available
 - Vital Statistics:
 - Sidney Douglas Finlayson, b. July 16, 1894, Sicamous, Birth Certificate No. 1894-09-186921
 - Kenneth Roy Finlayson, b. April 1, 1899, Sicamous, Birth Certificate No. 1899-09-186928
 - James Oscar Mackie and Jean Gibb Finlayson, m. June 6, 1923, Sicamous, Marriage Certificate No. 1923-09-264377
 - William Finlayson, d. April 11, 1927, Vernon, Death Certificate No. 1927-09-391614
- NOTE: Further investigation is necessary to confirm that this is the husband of Mary Janet Finlayson**
- Kenneth Roy Finlayson and Vera Anne Stepp, m. June 2, 1935, Sicamous, Marriage Certificate No. 1935-09-425993
 - Mary Janet Finlayson, d. March 11, 1949, Sicamous, age 89, Death Certificate No. 1949-09-003441

2. Context – Subject Site



Figure 1: Context of Red Barn Arts Centre within the District of Sicamous
Source: District of Sicamous

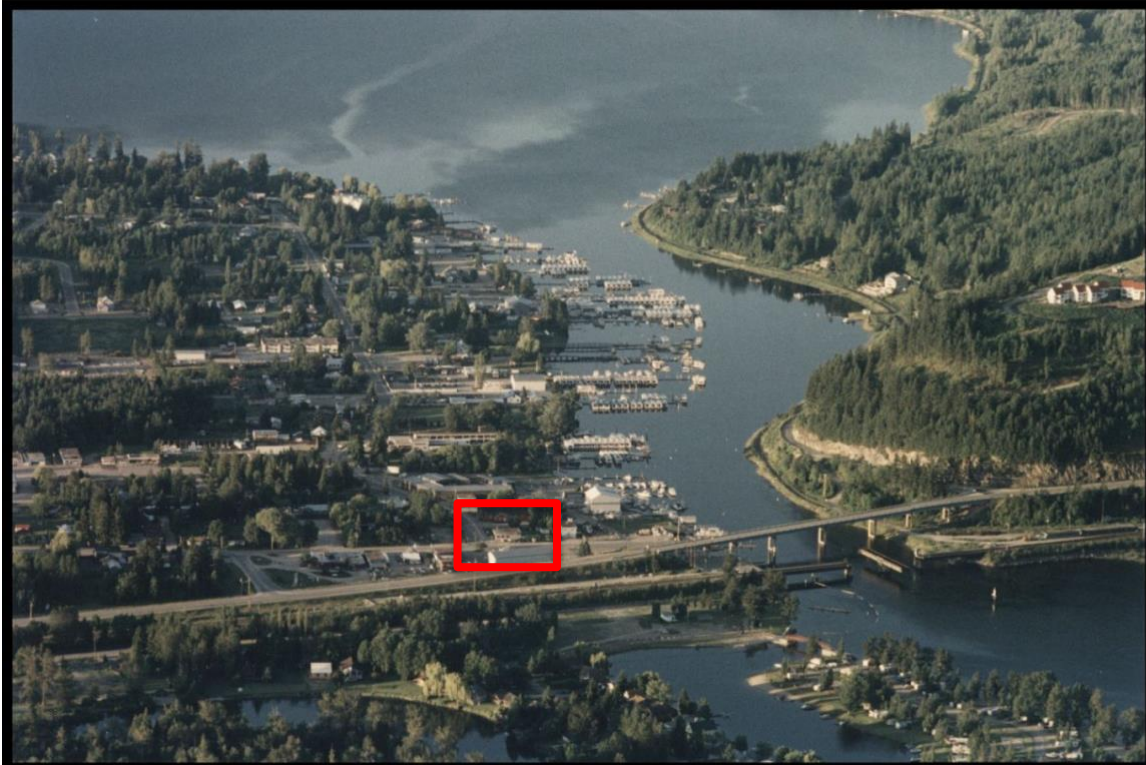


Figure 2: Aerial View of Sicamous Narrows
Sicamous and District Museum and Historical Society Photograph Collection, Archives SICA_01_C009, undated. From Mackie collection photograph series.
Red Barn Arts Centre site outlined in red

Figure 1 illustrates the wider location of the Red Barn Arts Centre in relation to the community, Mara Lake and Shuswap Lake, which are joined by Sicamous Narrows. The Red Barn Arts Centre is situated immediately to the east of the Narrows, and in close proximity to both the Trans-Canada Highway and the Canadian Pacific Railway. Figure 2 shows its location in relation to those features, with Mara Lake at the top, Sicamous Narrows to the centre right, and the Trans-Canada Highway and Canadian Pacific Railway running across the bottom.



Figure 3: Aerial View of Sicamous Narrows (Detail)

Sicamous and District Museum and Historical Society Photograph Collection, Archives SICA_01_C009, undated. From Mackie collection photograph series.

Red Barn Arts Centre site outlined in red

The Red Barn Arts Centre is setback somewhat from the waterfront and the docks, with the property backing on to Young Crescent which in turn runs alongside the Narrows (Figures 3 and 4). The business centre of Sicamous is primarily located directly to the east of the Red Barn Arts Centre. The settlement and early decades of development in Sicamous is tied to the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway nearby in 1885, and the development of a luxury hotel overlooking Shuswap Lake in the 1890s. This illustrates the historical significance of rail service through the community. The Red Barn Arts Centre in particular exemplifies Sicamous' continued growth and its need for expanded facilities to serve the community in the early 20th century.



Figure 4: Aerial View of Sicamous Narrows
Sicamous and District Museum and Historical Society Photograph Collection, Archives
SICA_01_C010, undated. From Mackie collection photograph series.
Red Barn Arts Centre site outlined in red

3. Context – Historical

The Red Barn sits at the westerly end of the community of Sicamous, adjacent the point known as “the narrows” of Shuswap Lake. The area’s rich cultural history is attributed to the traditional territory of the Shuswap Nation, and specifically Secwepemc, who have lived in the area for thousands of years. Prior to the influx of settlers, it was most easily travelled by water routes in addition to well-used trails that allowed for access to trading and hunting destinations. Food was supplemented by annual salmon migration.

The discovery of gold in along the Columbia River 1864 prompted the first limited foray of settlers into the region. Seymour City became the supply centre. Water transportation remained the primary means of movement including a steamer from Kamloops running along Shuswap Lake and Mara Lake, as far as Enderby (Figure 5).



Figure 5: S.S. Spallumcheen Paddle Wheeler at Sicamous or Eagles Landing, Enderby and District Museum and Archives, Local Identifier 2250, n.d.

A limited road network was constructed but parts of that network was obliterated by the railway lines that followed. With the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885 and the “last spike” driven at Craigellachie, 22 km to the east, the paddle wheelers were rendered obsolete. However, the railway initiated construction of stores, a post office, schools, hotels and homes in the area, and Sicamous even had its own jail. Railway stations were set up along a number of points between Revelstoke and Kamloops and a subsequent branch of that railway extended south from Sicamous to Enderby and beyond by the early 1900s (Figure 6). As with many regions in BC, logging played a large role in the economic development, and Sicamous was no exception.

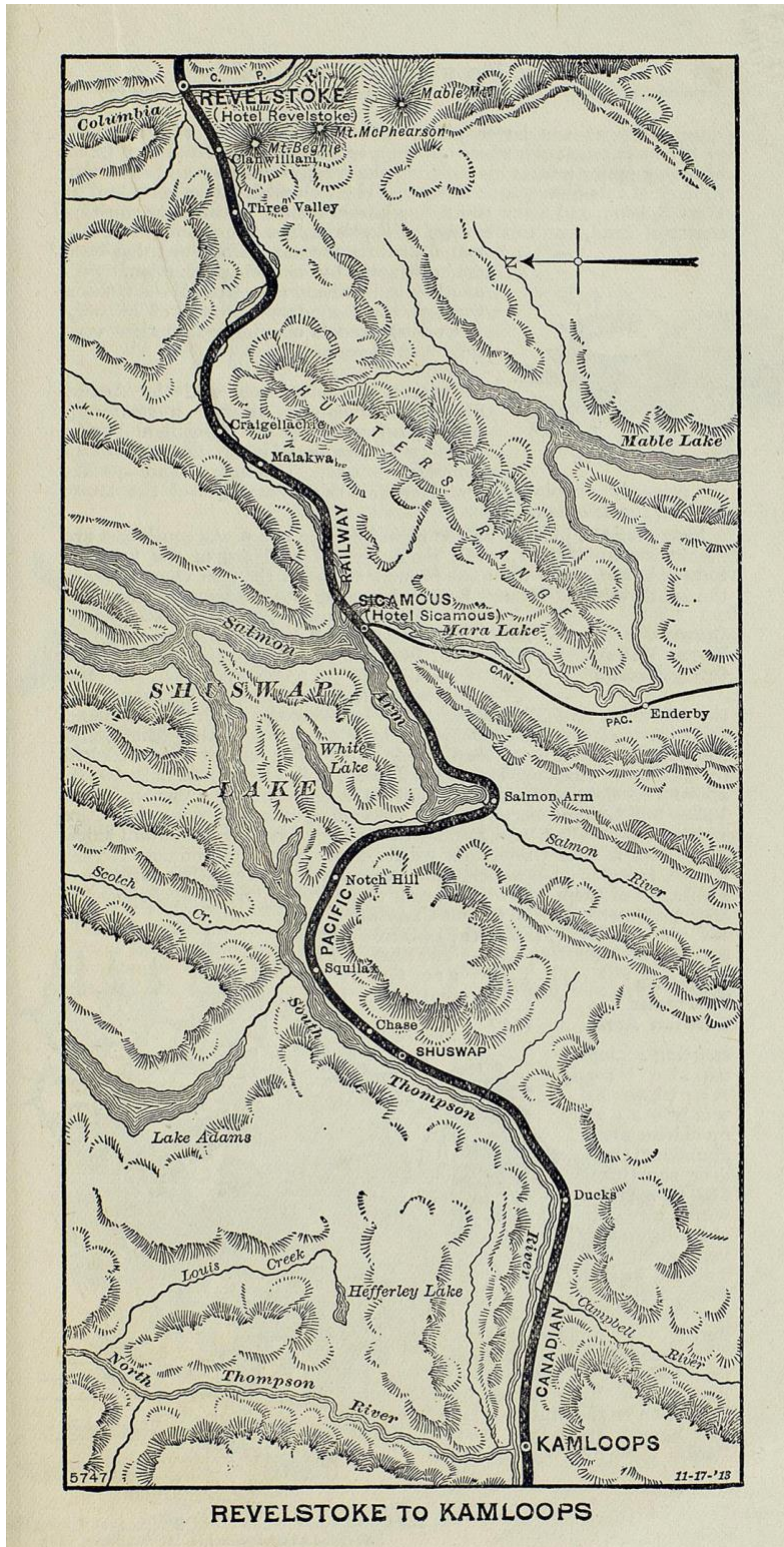


Figure 6: "Across Canada by Canadian Pacific Railway," 1913, p. 81.
Canadian Pacific Railway Hotels in BC, UBC Digitization Centre

It is worth noting, however, that in the first 15 years of operation, the CPR did not bring a large number of settlers into the area: there were only approximately 40 settlers in the Shuswap area in 1891, for example¹. With the worldwide depression beginning to lift around 1896, increased settlement occurred in the Shuswap area from European immigrants, settlers from eastern Canada and the US.

Nevertheless, development of the area around Sicamous was prompted by the railway and associated businesses, as illustrated by the two prominent hotels. One was the CPR's own hotel connected to the station (Figures 7, 8 and 9). Built in 1890, Figure 7 illustrates the grand style and scale of that first hotel, set on the south side of Shuswap Lake, with a panoramic view to the north. The first hotel and the interconnected station, however, was destroyed by fire only eight years after its construction.



Figure 7: CPR Station and Sicamous Hotel, built 1890. Photo circa 1895.
Sicamous and District Museum and Historical Society

¹ *History of Economic Development of the Shuswap Area*, Helen Brown Akrigg, Master of Arts, UBC Open Collections, 1964, page 58.

Undeterred, the CPR had the hotel reconstructed in the Tudor style in 1900. The second CPR Hotel and station (Figures 8 and 9) had 75 rooms and a third storey was added in 1908. This building was an even more prominent landmark not only for the community but the region, drawing people to Sicamous from across Canada and beyond to explore the area's spectacular natural beauty.



Figure 8: Depot and CPR Hotel, Sicamous. Date unknown, est. 1920-1935
University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. Uno
Langmann Family Collection of B.C. Photographs. UL_1670_0046



Figure 9: Sicamous Hotel, 1895 *
Peachland Museum Historical Photo Collection

* While this photo is dated as 1895, it is the early 1900s, since a fire destroyed the original hotel in 1898 and a new hotel was constructed in 1900 in this style. Other photos from the 20th century match this one.

Similar to all railway hotels of that era, regardless of whether they were remote or in a large city, it was opulent, and provided high-end comfort to guests in the way of décor, service and cuisine. The hotel was closed in 1956 and finally demolished around 1964 (Figure 10) shortly after the opening of the Trans-Canada Highway (1962). The closure and demolition of the hotel, with the opening of the Trans-Canada Highway, illustrate a shifting role of the community – away from rail and towards tourist-oriented car travel. To some degree, this reflects other facilities, such as the Sicamous Community Hall, which also closed in the 1950s although it took on new roles in the subsequent years and decades.

The other prominent hotel was the Bellevue Hotel which was in proximity to the CPR Roundhouse on the west side of the narrows (Figure 11).

<p>the resignation of Dr. W. G. Evans. Voting will take place on July 9.</p> <p>★ ★ ★</p> <p>SICAMOUS — A new CPR station is to be built on the site of an old landmark, the Sicamous Hotel. It is being demolished by an Alberta firm. Built by the Canadian</p>	<p>Pacific Railway, the hotel has stood for half a century on Shuswap Lake.</p> <p>★ ★ ★</p> <p>KELOWNA — Building permits for the month of June were issued in the amount of \$262,403. For the corresponding month in 1963, permits were issued in the amount of \$217,037.</p>
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Figure 10: Note pertaining to Sicamous Hotel demolition - *Vancouver Sun*, June 30, 1964



Figure 11: Bellevue Hotel and CPR Roundhouse
Sicamous and District Museum and Historical Society Photograph Collection, Archives Image 0267, n.d.

5. History of the Red Barn

The historical development of the Red Barn goes back to some of the earliest development in Sicamous. It was constructed in 1926, as the community's first social hall, when the population of the village had reached 350. The first steps were in the formation of the "Sicamous Amusement Club" through which the desire for a community hall was expressed. The land was donated by Mrs. M.J. [Mary Janet] Finlayson, an early settler whose family was prominent in the community for many decades and who operated other key businesses including a general store, post office, and later a service station. Shares were sold to raise money for the required material and labour. The Finlayson family influenced and contributed to many aspects of development and prosperity in the town. For example, they managed the post office for 60 years and from 1895 to the mid-1950s ran the Finlayson General Store.

The R.W. Bruhn Company cleared the land and supplied the lumber from its mill in nearby Canoe, at a discounted cost.

Plans for the hall were drafted by Bill Finlayson and Frank Kappell. The initial layout included an entry into an open dance floor at the east end, flanked by a ladies' room and men's cloakroom, with a small stage at the west end along with small rooms on either side.

The contract for construction was awarded to Fred Peters, at a value of \$425, covering the flooring, wainscoting and labour. Other aspects of the work such as gyproc walling was done by volunteers. The work was overseen by Mr. Caswell and Roy Boutwell of Salmon Arm, beginning in September 1926 and completed in roughly three weeks. Following a formal inspection of the building, it was determined that fire exiting and a chimney were required.

The grand opening was held in the fall of 1926, highlighted by decorations of coloured leaves and berries. Oil lanterns were used as the primary lighting source, followed by gasoline lamps. Delco lights were supplied by Mr. Roy Finlayson who operated a garage nearby, Delco lights consisted of a generator fueled by kerosene and hooked to a series of batteries (similar to those found in cars). They provided a reliable, and safer, source of electric lighting and additionally provided power, prior to bringing in generated power from across the channel in 1936.

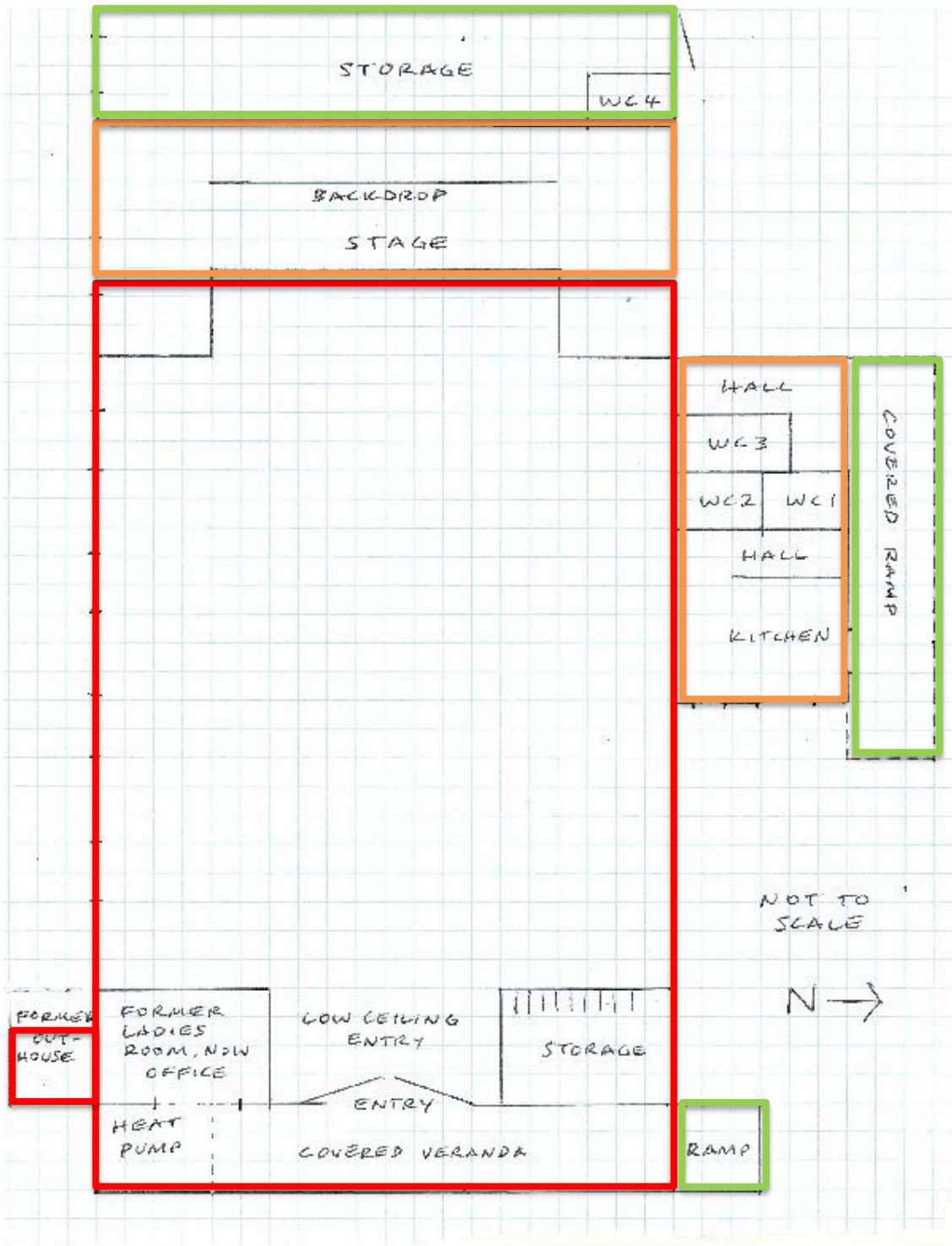


Figure 12a: Plan of main floor of Red Barn Arts Centre, with extent and dates of additions. Red outline indicates original extent of building (1926); Orange outline indicates additions following the fire in the early 1950s; Green outline indicates subsequent additions (undated). Note: not to scale and the exact division between the original fire-damaged small stage and the larger reconstructed stage is approximate. Adapted from sketch plan provided by Joy Neish, Eagle Valley Arts Council.

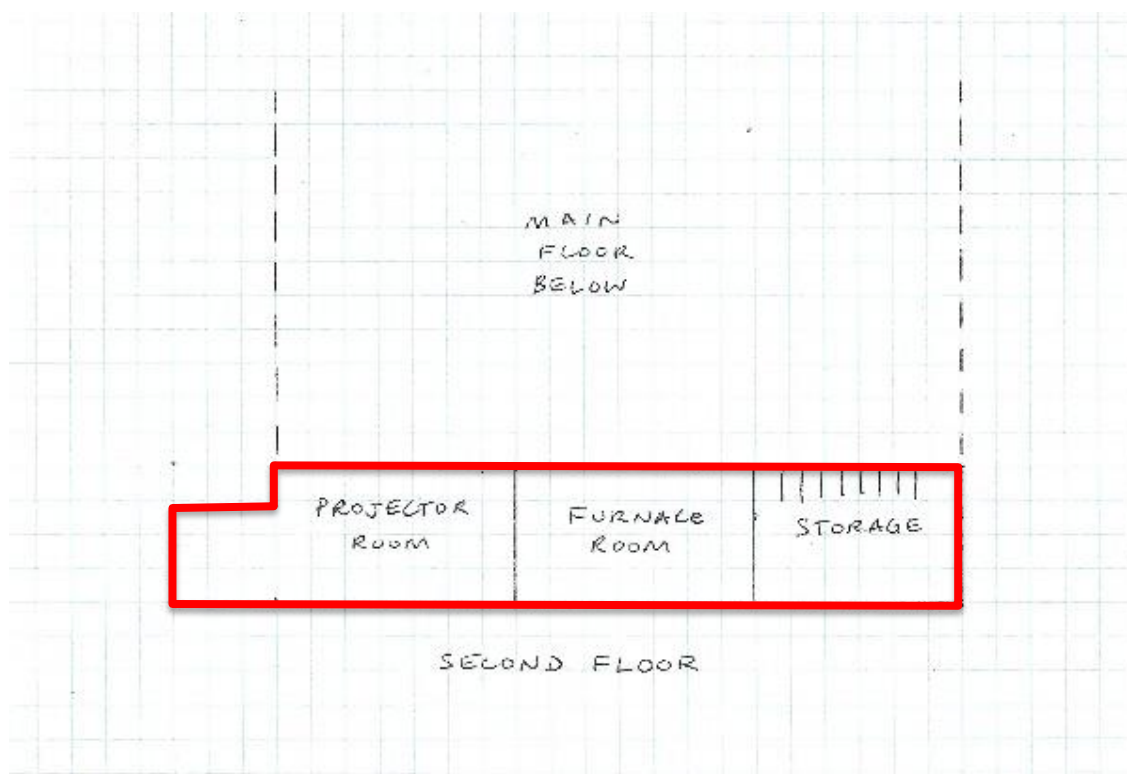


Figure 12b: Plan of the second floor of Red Barn Arts Centre. Red outline indicates original extent of building (1926). Note: not to scale. Adapted from sketch plan provided by Joy Neish, Eagle Valley Arts Council.

Figures 12a and 12b outline the original layout of the building. It was basic in its form and room layout, with an entry vestibule leading into a large open space with a stage at the opposite end. There was originally no kitchen or washroom, only an “outhouse” connected to the front (south-east) corner. It originally had a full width porch, which by the 1940s had been removed and replaced with a small vestibule extension, but which was later reinstated. A small second floor space was accessed through a front room, leading to storage and a projector room.

The social and cultural significance of the Red Barn is unparalleled in Sicamous. Throughout most of its history, it provided community space for gatherings, celebrations, performances and meetings. Initially, as the town’s community hall, it held all community events, and its first activity was a school Christmas concert in December 1926. This continued annually as one of the major events here for the next 20 years. Fred Peters performed the necessary work to temporarily expand the stage for this event. The Women’s Institute was the primary supporting group, who organized the first Christmas concert, regularly canvassed for funds for Christmas gifts for all children, and arranged for Santa to arrive after the school concert.

Activities in the hall included dances and parties on Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve, Robbie Burns Day, Valentines, Halloween and Remembrance Day. The additional activities hosted in the hall span the entire array of community, celebratory, and social and cultural events. These include retirement and farewell parties, bridal showers, wedding receptions, plays and various other forms of entertainment, bazaars, conventions and workshops, golden anniversary celebrations, along with one wedding ceremony and one funeral.

The frequency of the hall's social use is illustrated in the variety of meetings held here. It hosted Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, Brownies and Cubs, along with physical activities such as badminton and gym classes. The building's value extended to spiritual use for church and Sunday School. May Day celebrations were first held in 1929 as another Women's Institute activity: Mary Sabourin was crowned May Queen. This continued for over thirty years at the community hall. The north side of the hall was decorated outside with evergreen trees, flags and flowers as a backdrop for the May Queen and her Royal Party. The adjacent property on the north side, at that time vacant, provided a grassed area to set up the May Pole Dance and other programming. Afternoon tea was served in the hall, along with a children's dance in the evening and an adult's dance later that continued into the early morning hours.

With the installation of electricity, motion pictures were also held regularly. Bill Smith of Armstrong was the projectionist/operator, followed by Frank Treat and Bob Wood. The admission, initially, was 15 cents.

A fire that destroyed the west end of the building in the mid 1950s, including the original stage, afforded the opportunity to enlarge the stage, provide washrooms and a kitchen extension on the north side. This also provided the opportunity to add hot and cold water. An additional rear extension set behind the stage was completed at a later unspecified date.

By the time of the fire, the Royal Canadian Legion had bought out the shareholders but most of the social and cultural activities tied to the community hall continued. It was in the late 1950s that the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch #99, relocated to a purpose-built facility at 322 Main Street, and this became the new focus of community activities. It remained unused until a Dr. Roberts purchased it to store boats. It was in March 1975 when the building took on new ownership and it was renovated. The purchase by Mr. and Mrs. Bill Arnold saw the ladies' washroom made into an office, with a large window installed, and the full-width front porch was added along with an addition to the west end for car repairs and a repair shop. The outside was painted red and white trim was added and the following month, it was opened as "2nd Time Around Shop", selling vehicles, furniture and household effects. The Arnold's activity here was short-lived, as an illness forced them to sell to Bob Tees of Canmore, Alberta.

In 1978, Walter Derkaz bought the property and rented the space to a variety of businesses. There was a concession, photography store, book store, and a craft shop. It was transformed into a mini-mall, reflecting the desire at that time for even the smallest communities to take on a retail form usually seen in larger towns and cities. At that point it became known as the “Red Barn” and added a farmer’s market and bingo games.

As the original recreational needs of the community were no longer served by the building, it was in 1983 when the Sicamous and District Recreation Centre, located in M.J. Finlayson Centennial Park, had its grand opening. Reflecting the roots and community spirit of the Red Barn Arts Centre, the new recreation centre was built with a significant amount of volunteer help and donated building materials.

The transition to its current use began in September 1986. An Expo Legacy Grant of \$66,000 assisted with the purchase of the Red Barn by the Eagle Valley Arts Council, who at that time acquired a \$34,000 mortgage. The ownership by the Arts Council continues to this day.

Source: History of the Red Barn, written by Marjorie V. Dobson, 1987. Submitted by Joy Neish of the Eagle Valley Arts Council.

6. Association with the Finlayson Family

There is documentation of the Finlayson family, one of the foremost pioneer families connected to Sicamous, worthy of mention.

The land for the Sicamous Community Hall was donated by a Mrs. M.J. Finlayson of Sicamous. Records show this to be Mary Janet Finlayson, born May 11, 1859, in Port Adelaide, Australia, of Scottish descendance. Her husband was William Finlayson, born in Sterling, Scotland. She came to Canada in 1886, settling in Saltcoats, Saskatchewan (at that time, N.W.T.), where she had at least one child, Jean Gibb Finlayson. The Finlaysons moved to British Columbia in 1892. In July 1894, she gave birth to a son, Sidney Douglas Finlayson, followed by Kenneth Roy Finlayson in April 1899. It is assumed that the family settled in or around Sicamous at that time. Mary’s daughter, Jean, married James Oscar Mackie in June 1923.

Vital Statistics records show a William Finlayson who died in Vernon on April 11, 1927. While it cannot be confirmed that this is Mary Janet’s husband without further examination of the details on the death certificate, certain details such as his death in Vernon and his year of birth in 1853, making him about 6 years older than Mary Janet, correspond roughly to that of his wife. The year of donation of land, and noteworthy as done by Mrs. Mary J. Finlayson and not her husband, suggest that William was not in a place to manage the donation or that his health may already have been failing at that time.

Mary Janet Finlayson died suddenly in Sicamous in 1949; she was nearly 90 years old, and cause of death was coronary occlusion due to arteriosclerosis. She is buried in Vernon City Cemetery. Her son, Sidney Finlayson, signed the death certificate.

The Finlaysons ran the general store and post office (Figure 13) from around 1895 to the mid 1950s.



Figure 13: Murry's Store During 1972 Sicamous Flood
Sicamous and District Museum and Historical Society Photograph Collection,
SICA_01_B054, 1972.

Notes on photo describe this as "Murray's Store June 13, 1972, originally M.J. Finlayson and Son store built 1948."

Later, with the advent of the automobile, the family owned and operated a service station, known as Finlayson's Garage, selling products of Imperial Oil (Figure 14). In a community of this size, the role of the Finlayson family cannot be understated. Their name still features prominently in the community, with a street (just north of the Red Barn Arts Centre) named after them, along with M.J. Finlayson Centennial Park located to the east.



Figure 14: Finlayson's Garage During 1948 Sicamous Flood
Sicamous and District Museum and Historical Society Photograph Collection,
SICA_01_B005.

7. References

Writings, Thesis and Websites:

History of the Red Barn, written by Marjorie V. Dobson, unpublished 1987.
Submitted by Joy Neish of the Eagle Valley Arts Council.

History of Economic Development of the Shuswap Area, Helen Brown Akrigg, Master of Arts, UBC Open Collections, 1964

<https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/ubctheses/831/items/1.0106826>

Shuswap History in Pictures: Sicamous Regatta. Eagle Valley News, March 6, 2020
<https://www.eaglevalleynews.com/community/shuswap-history-in-pictures-sicamous-regatta/>

Welcome to Sicamous. Sicamous and District Chamber of Commerce
<https://sicamouschamber.bc.ca/the-red-barn/>

Historical Photo Collections:

- Enderby and District Museum and Archives
- Peachland Museum Historical Photo Collection
- Sicamous and District Museum and Historical Society Photograph Collection
- University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections

Telephone conversation with Betty Hill, July 5, 2021

Betty Hill has witnessed some of the most significant events around the Red Barn including the fire and expansion, construction of the larger stage, the kitchen addition, the provision of what is normally considered basic services that the building did not originally have such as washrooms, made more functional and upgraded in recent times and most recently the provision of hot water on demand.

The Red Barn building was very important for May Day, which at that time was the biggest event of the year. May Queen, pole, events around it brought in adults and children alike. Betty took part in those activities in the 1940s. It was also very important for shows (had a projectionist), everyone sat on wood benches, children paid 5 cents entry admission. Also important for community dances, school activities, other groups such as guides, plays, parties, Christmas (Santa's visits). It was always in use by many groups. After it was sold, it used for Bingo and other activities. Its use can be summarized into several categories:

1. Cultural: May Day, dances, Arts Centre over the last four decades
2. Entertainment: movie nights, parties
3. Educational: school activities that could not be hosted at the school itself (e.g. phys ed)

4. Social: wedding receptions, funeral gatherings, Guides and other youth groups, use by the Legion
5. Economic: farmers' market, mini-mall

The Women's Institute, which played one of the earliest important roles in activities around and in the building, also provided dynamite to local farmers to clear their land, illustrating another indirect, but economically important role, that the WI played. Betty's father was one of those persons who acquired dynamite from the Institute. Betty's mother, Vivian Rauma, had a life-long membership at the Red Barn, from roughly the mid-1930s to 1995. Another important individual of that time was Ann MacDonald, whose membership was not quite as long (moved to Kamloops). Amy Boutwell, Betty's sister, still resides in Sicamous and has had a long-term active role with contributions to many activities.

The role of this building in supplementing and supporting school activities is significant. Initially the school was a one-room schoolhouse, then two rooms, and later four rooms by the late 1940s. At that time, however, there was still no gymnasium or other space, the school simply consisted of classrooms. A gymnasium was not added until the mid-1950s. Therefore, the Red Barn contributed in an educational role as well, with school plays, athletics and other activities that could not be hosted at the school itself.

From an economic perspective, the early services and facilities in the village were the general store and post office, a shoe maker, boat maker, Finlayson's garage (Finlayson family also donated land for a park), the CPR station and hotel and a second hotel, and the Red Barn. It played a unique and critical role in the community, and alongside the general store and post office, offered some of the most important services and activities in the area.

Telephone conversation with Gord Mackie, July 12 and 15, 2021

Similar to Betty Hill, Gord Mackie has witnessed some of the most significant events around the Red Barn, having been born in Sicamous in 1928 and lived all his life in the community except for a period spanning 1949 to 1965 when he worked elsewhere for the Bank of Commerce. He also served as first Mayor of the District of Sicamous (1989-1999), upon its incorporation as the 148th municipality in British Columbia on December 4, 1989.

Gord's experiences go back to when he was in Grade 1, when his class would have done performances (singing Christmas carols) at the Community Hall.

He noted that Fred Peters had the contract for the Community Hall and therefore should be noted as the builder. The relationship of R.W. Bruhn Co. to the project was in the provision of lumber and the workers to clear the lot.

Gord noted that the fire at the west end of the building, where the stage is located, probably occurred in the early 1950s although an exact date has not been determined. As a young man, in his early 20's he helped to put it out. The old pumper truck was set up 200-300 feet from the channel and pumped water up to the site to put out the fire. The fire was somewhat of a blessing in disguise, as it allowed for major upgrades to take place, not just a new stage but also wiring, plumbing (new bathroom), kitchen, etc.

In 1948, the flood came close to the floor of the building, and covered one corner of the wood (birch?) flooring, at a point where the building had subsided slightly.

On broader topics, the importance of immigrants to the area was discussed, and Gord noted that there was significant Finnish immigration following completion of the railway. To serve the area, every four miles there was a station or a stop. In 1913 the Cambie Hall was built nearby.

In more recent years, in his role with the Arts Council, Gord noted that work on the foundation was done (late 1980s, after the Arts Council acquired the building). He worked with Gerry deSilva and others to repair the foundation. Gerry was an ex-army engineer, making him the most qualified of the group to do this work. The foundation consists of 8x8 timbers on concrete blocks and some rot was evident, particularly on the north side. They cut out the rot, and replaced those sections with treated railway ties. In Gord's experience, when assessing volunteer significance, the period since the Arts Council took over the building has been the most important and fulfilling.

Fay Mabee (Mackie) who was an important member of the Women's Institute was Gord's mother.

While the Legion moved out of the Red Barn into its own facility, their new building had two floors. It was a challenge for those who were mobility-challenged or the elderly who needed to navigate stairs. Eventually the Legion installed a stair lift to address this. The layout of the Red Barn was handier than the new Legion building.

Over the many decades, the one event that stands out as the most significant local celebrations was the May Day festival. This began in the 1930s and continued through to the 1960s and was held in and around the Red Barn for most of that time. In later years they used the high school space.

The Red Barn served other roles in more recent years. In the 1990s the District Hall was an old forestry building, and it was too small to hold public meetings, where plans needed to be laid out or even a modest size gathering needed to be accommodated. The Red Barn provided an important space that the District Hall could not provide for open houses and other public meetings.

Another very important role of the Red Barn, albeit not happening today, were the Arts Council-sponsored plays which were held from roughly 2000 to the mid-2010s.

In the early 1950s, the Royal Canadian Legion acquired the hall, a few years before a fire destroyed the west end of the building. In the restoration, builders added a much larger stage area, washrooms and a kitchen. In the late 1950s, the Legion built new facilities and the hall sat unused until being bought by Mr. and Mrs. Bill Arnold. In 1978 it changed hands again when Walter Derkaz bought it and turned it into a mini-mall called the Red Barn. In 1986, with the help of an Expo Legacy Grant, the Eagle Valley Arts Council bought the hall and continue to own it today.