

# CULTURAL HERITAGE EVALUATION REPORT

**Building Name and Address:** 73 Britannia Road

**Construction Date:** circa 1912

**Original Owner:** James Edmund Hodgins



73 Britannia Road, west façade, Source: Google Maps, 2023

## Executive Summary

73 Britannia Road is a side gabled, one and a half storey vernacular style residence with Craftsman style features that was constructed circa 1912 in Britannia, Ottawa. The first owner of the property was Andrew Holland of the Holland Brothers, who impacted many spheres in Ottawa. The first homeowners were James Edmund Hodgins and Emma Murphy from 1912 to 1917. They purchased the lot from Emma's brother, Edward Ernest Murphy of the Murphy Brothers contractors and bricklayers. The Murphy Brothers built several buildings in Britannia and Ottawa, including 175 Britannia Road, Emma's former residence among other early cottages. From 1922 into the 1940s, Clement Harold Tyers and his family lived at 73 Britannia Road. It is suggested that in the early 1920s, the Craftsman style features of the central gable dormer and the wide verandah

with its substantial columns and cobblestone piers were added, which satisfies Britannia's vernacular style. This building exemplifies Britannia's vernacular style cottage and contributes to the character of Britannia as a summer cottage community after the turn of the century.

The property has cultural heritage value for its design, associative and contextual values. It meets four of the nine criteria for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

## **Architecture**

73 Britannia Road is a one and a half storey vernacular house built around 1912 as a year-round residence. The architect or builder of the house is unknown; however, it is possible the first homeowner, James Edmund Hodgins, who was a carpenter by trade, may have built the house. The property is located on the east side of Britannia Road south of Cassels Street in Britannia Village. The structure was built as a detached house, and it continues to be used for residential purposes.

The cottage was constructed during Britannia's golden years as a summer resort, from 1900 to 1914. Around the turn of the twentieth century, Britannia's established vernacular cottage style residences typically featured one and a half storeys, a simple box or L-shaped form, horizontal lap siding or shingle cladding, a verandah on the front façade or wrapping around multiple façades, and ornamentation focused on the roof and verandah.



73 Britannia Road, west and south façade, Source: Google Maps, 2016

73 Britannia Road exemplifies Britannia's vernacular cottage style as the original structure was a simple, square shaped wood frame structure. It features a side gable and is one and a half storeys in height. A characteristic feature includes horizontal lap siding as the primary cladding painted white, currently with dark green architectural details including the gable and hip dormer pediments, trim, soffits, and wood window surrounds. The use of dark green to highlight architectural feature can be seen at other vernacular residences from this period in the neighbourhood, for example 195 Bradford Street. The verandah and dormer gables have a thin, yellow border outlining the green fanning ornamentation.



73 Britannia Road, west and north façade, Source: City of Ottawa, 2024

The house has a prominent, wide verandah with a deep rafter overhang, and a central gable fronted dormer on the west/front façade built in the Craftsman style. Influenced by the Arts and Crafts style, Craftsman style focuses on handcrafted elements and strongly feature verandahs to create “outdoor rooms,”<sup>1</sup> which also satisfies Britannia’s vernacular cottage style to create a space that merged indoor and outdoor living. Other Craftsman style elements include the side gable extending over the verandah, the entrance through the verandah, the use of natural materials, and heavy timber pillars, all of which can be demonstrated at 73 Britannia Road.<sup>2</sup> The house also features three thick wood columns, square capitals and bases, and slightly tapered cobblestone column bases.

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Durant Visser, *Porches of North America*, (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2012), 235.

<sup>2</sup> Heritage Resource Centre University of Waterloo, “Ontario Architectural Style Guide,” January 2009, date accessed November 7, 2023, <https://www.therealtydeal.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Heritage-Resource-Centre-Achitectural-Styles-Guide.pdf>; Visser, *Porches of North America*, 235-236.





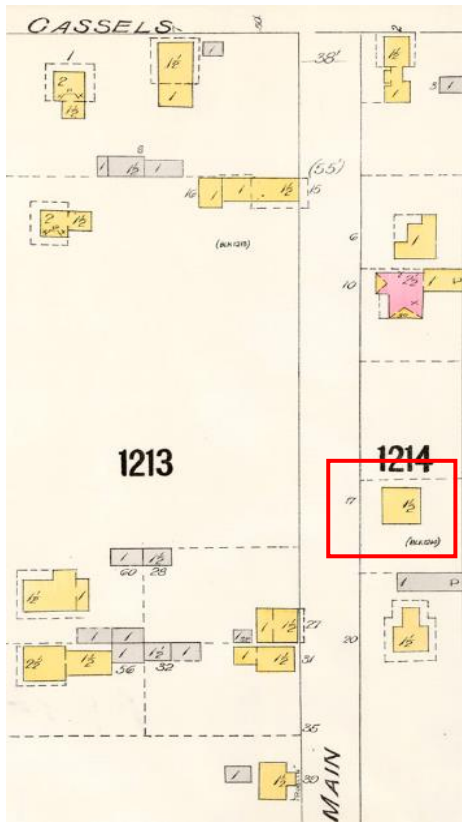
73 Britannia Road, prominent Craftsman style features on west façade,  
Source: City of Ottawa, 2024

The verandah is not present on the 1912 or 1922 Ottawa Fire Insurance Plans, and because the side gable cuts into the verandah, the verandah and likely the gable dormer were not original and were later additions.<sup>3</sup> The Craftsman style was seen in Ontario from the 1900s to 1930s.<sup>4</sup> In 1923, the property was granted for the first large amount of \$2500, which may suggest the verandah and gable dormer were added around this time, which fits within the period of Craftsman style's popularity. The first time Britannia appears on aerial photos of Ottawa is 1958 and the verandah and gable dormer are present, indicating this is the latest date that they could have been added.

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<sup>3</sup> Ottawa Fire Insurance Plan, 1912, 168; Ottawa Fire Insurance Plan, 1922, 168.

<sup>4</sup> "Ontario Architectural Style Guide."



73 Britannia Road (formerly 17 Main Street, Source: Ottawa Fire Insurance Plan, 1912, page 168



73 Britannia Road (formerly 17 Main Street, Source: Ottawa Fire Insurance Plan, 1922, page 168



Aerial view of 73 Britannia Road, with prominent verandah and dormer visible, Source: GeoOttawa, 1958

Additionally, the north, west, and south façade have a variety of paned sash windows, which are also characteristic of Craftsman style.<sup>5</sup>

Photographs of the house from 1979 show the verandah and central gable dormer have minor alterations to its current appearance.<sup>6</sup> The verandah gable ornamentation is predominantly in dark green on a white background. The central gable dormer is clad in wood shingles, which fits the Craftsman style as it used natural wood elements to connect to the environment.<sup>7</sup> Shingle Style is rare in Ottawa, but there are examples in Britannia, and wood shingle cladding on upper storeys and second storey porches are common in the cottage community, such as 95 Kirby Road.

Historically, a one storey addition was built between 1922 and 1948 on the northeast corner on the rear of the building.<sup>8</sup> In 1985, this addition was demolished and replaced by a two storey addition on the rear extending the entire length of the building.

## History

Most of Britannia was purchased in 1873 and Plan 40 ½ was created to develop the cottage community. The most eastern boundary of Plan 40 ½ was the west side of Main Street (currently Britannia Road). Likely due to the development's success, Plan 71 was drafted in 1875, adding a row of properties on the west side of Main Street (Britannia Road). 73 Britannia Road is situated on lot 5 of Plan 71 on the north end of the street.

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<sup>5</sup> "Ontario Architectural Style Guide."

<sup>6</sup> Ottawa Heritage Planning Study 01 Britannia, 1979-1990, A2009-1343 Box #1, City of Ottawa Archives, [http://ottawa.minisisinc.com/ottawa/scripts/mwimain.dll?get&file=\[ottawa\\_web\]NewOPAC\search.html#/144/DESCRIPTION/WEB\\_DETAIL\\_DESC/SISN%20138274?SESSIONSEARCH](http://ottawa.minisisinc.com/ottawa/scripts/mwimain.dll?get&file=[ottawa_web]NewOPAC\search.html#/144/DESCRIPTION/WEB_DETAIL_DESC/SISN%20138274?SESSIONSEARCH).

<sup>7</sup> Visser, *Porches of North America*, 236.

<sup>8</sup> Ottawa Fire Insurance Plan, 1922, 168; Ottawa Fire Insurance Plan, 1948, 333.

The first deed was given in 1891 to Andrew Holland of the Holland Brothers, purveyors of emerging inventions, owners and editors of the *Ottawa Citizen* and Senate reporters, and Andrew was connected with the Ottawa Electric Company and their streetcar expansion into the west end.<sup>9</sup> Given there's no amount associated with the deed on the land register, and the city directories do not have him residing in Britannia,<sup>10</sup> it is likely Andrew Holland owed the land but did not build a structure. In 1901, Andrew Holland and his wife sold lot 5 to Richard A Sims, an Ottawa contractor, who sold it the same month to Ronald W Grant, who worked at that time as a manager at David Maxwell & Sons then in insurance and real estate in Ottawa.<sup>11</sup>

From 1910 to 1912, the property was owned by Edward Ernest Murphy, son of William Murphy and May Phillips. Edward was raised in Britannia and was a resident member of the Britannia Boat House Club.<sup>12</sup> With his brother John Albert, they owned Murphy Brothers, a contracting and bricklaying business operating from 1902 to 1952 in Britannia and across Ottawa.<sup>13</sup> The Murphy Brothers can be credited with building 127 Britannia Road in Britannia for their father, along with several projects in the city including St James' United Church, No 7 Fire Hall [58 Arthur Street], the Family theatre [built in 1911 on Queen Street], and several apartment houses.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Dave Allston, "The History of Holland Avenue: A Story of Two Brothers," *Kitchissippi Times*, September 9, 2021, accessed November 8, 2023, <https://kitchissippi.com/2021/09/09/the-history-of-holland-avenue-a-story-of-two-brothers/>.

<sup>10</sup> Ottawa City Directories, 1893-94, 293; Ottawa City Directories, 1895-96, 299; Ottawa City Directories, 1896-97, 253; Ottawa City Directories, 1897-98, 258; Ottawa City Directories, 1898-99, 264; Ottawa City Directories, 1901, 282.

<sup>11</sup> Ottawa City Directory, 1901, 267; Ottawa City Directory, 1906, 292; Ottawa City Directory, 1907, 315; Ottawa City Directory, 1908, 327.

<sup>12</sup> "Edward E. Murphy Contractor Dies Suddenly," *The Ottawa Journal*, June 21, 1958, accessed November 9, 2023, <https://cityofottawaarchives.newspapers.com/image/49403978/>.

<sup>13</sup> "E. Murphy Dies, Was Contractor," *The Ottawa Citizen*, June 21, 1958, accessed November 9, 2023, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/457008460/>.

<sup>14</sup> "John Albert Murphy Passed Away Sunday," *The Ottawa Citizen*, November 7, 1938, accessed November 9, 2023, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/456490898/>.



Following from 1912 to 1917, local carpenter James Edmund [Edmond] Hodgins and his wife, formerly Emma Murphy owned and lived at 73 Britannia Road.<sup>15</sup> The lot was purchased in April 1912, and in June of that year, James Edmond Hodgins married Emma Murphy, daughter of William Henry Murphy and sister of Edward Murphy.<sup>16</sup> William Henry Murphy was one of the early year-round residents of Britannia, who provided ice and cartage services to the village. The Murphy family lived at 127 Britannia Road, built in 1902 by Albert and Edward Murphy. Emma was born and educated in Britannia Heights,<sup>17</sup> and before living at 73 Britannia Road in 1912, she resided at 175 Britannia Road, which was constructed for her by her brothers, Edward and Albert circa 1908.<sup>18</sup> According to local newspapers, Emma Murphy was highly involved in her community through the Western Methodist Church (now the Britannia United Church) and the Ladies' Aid, the King's Daughter's Guild (hosted at the Fresh Air Cottage in Britannia), the Women's Auxiliary to Grace Hospital, and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union.

In 1919, the lot is granted to Herbert George Tyers, a commercial traveller for John M Garland Son & Co Ltd, wholesale dry goods.<sup>19</sup> Three years later, Herbert George grants lot 5 to his brother,<sup>20</sup> Clement Harold Tyers, who owns the

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<sup>15</sup> Ottawa City Directory, 1912, 929; Ottawa City Directory, 1913, 1053; Ottawa City Directory, 1914, 1127; Ottawa City Directory, 1915, 1130; Ottawa City Directory, 1916, 1161; Ottawa City Directory, 1917, 1030. Note: in the 1912 and 1913 Ottawa City Directory, the person residing at "h e s Main" in Britannia is Edward Hodgins. Given there is no other James/James E/Edmund/J Edmund in the directory, it's assumed "Edward" was a clerical error.

<sup>16</sup> "Mrs. J. Hodgins," *The Ottawa Citizen*, December 1, 1958, accessed November 14, 2023, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/456928972/>; "Marriage Record for James Edmund Hodgins and Emma Gertrude Murphy," Archives of Ontario, Registrations of Marriages, 1869-1928, Series Ms 932, Reel 206, accessed November 10, 2023, [https://www.ancestry.ca/discoveryui-content/view/2165753:7921?tid=&pid=&queryId=e810df862a4f60e9587ede55973431d6&\\_phsrc=tpo271&\\_phstart=successSource](https://www.ancestry.ca/discoveryui-content/view/2165753:7921?tid=&pid=&queryId=e810df862a4f60e9587ede55973431d6&_phsrc=tpo271&_phstart=successSource).

<sup>17</sup> "Mrs. J. Hodgins."

<sup>18</sup> "Individually designated properties," City of Ottawa, accessed November 14, 2023, [https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/documents/files/individually\\_designated\\_properties\\_en.pdf](https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/documents/files/individually_designated_properties_en.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> Ottawa City Directory, 1919, 909; Ottawa City Directory, 1920, 816; Ottawa City Directory, 1921, 856; "Ottawa Business Romances," *The Ottawa Journal*, May 7, 1920, accessed November 14, 2023, <https://cityofottawaarchives.newspapers.com/image/43433628/>.

<sup>20</sup> "1911 Census of Canada: Ontario, Ottawa City, Sub-District 17 Central Ward, Page 6," Ancestry, Statistics Canada, accessed November 10, 2023,

property from 1922 to 1945 and resides there from 1922 to 1939.<sup>21</sup> During the 1920s, Clement worked as a solicitor for the Ottawa Electric Company (OER), followed by a lodger keeper and accountant with the Ottawa Electric & Gas Company, then in the 1930s, he was employed in the Customs & Excise Department of National Revenue (today the Canada Revenue Agency).<sup>22</sup>

The house could have been built between 1901 and 1912, however given the small land register purchase amounts before 1912, with 1912 being the first instance an owner is documented living in the Britannia Bay suburb in the Ottawa City Directories, and the house appearing on the 1912 Ottawa Fire Insurance Plan, it can be concluded the house was built circa 1912. It is possible the Murphy Brothers constructed the house; however, it is quite simple in design compared to their other cottages in Britannia such as 175 Britannia Road. Given his trade as a carpenter, it is likely that James Edmund Hodgins built the house for him and his new wife, Emma Murphy around 1912.

Given the large amount that the property was purchased for in 1922 and the popularity of the Craftsman style during this period, it suggests the addition of the verandah and gabled dormer occurred around this time. The update can demonstrate the conversion from a simple, box form cottage to incorporate a transitional indoor and outdoor space. The addition also satisfied the local

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<https://www.ancestry.ca/sharing/7719915?mark=7b22746f6b656e223a224e4d49695157473366524c766839484b4a3567556b3530336a59554d6e77796e396b45495470364b2f2b4d3d222c22746f6b656e5f76657273696f6e223a225632227d>; “1901 Census of Canada: Ontario, Ottawa City, Central Ward, Page 26,” Ancestry, Statistics Canada, accessed November 10, 2023, <https://www.ancestry.ca/sharing/7719924?mark=7b22746f6b656e223a22543257654f73582f4b3034695247344651614a39344a6b4645484f486743394a786779715744624a5270633d222c22746f6b656e5f76657273696f6e223a225632227d>.

<sup>21</sup> Ottawa City Directory, 1922, 1106; Ottawa City Directory, 1923, 1088; Ottawa City Directory, 1924, 1140; Ottawa City Directory, 1926, 1082; Ottawa City Directory, 1927, 1115; Ottawa City Directory, 1928, 1194; Ottawa City Directory, 1929, 831; Ottawa City Directory, 1930, 580; Ottawa City Directory, 1931, 550; Ottawa City Directory, 1932, 548; Ottawa City Directory, 1933, 534; Ottawa City Directory, 1934, 536; Ottawa City Directory, 1935, 557; Ottawa City Directory, 1936, 565; Ottawa City Directory, 1937, 606; Ottawa City Directory, 1938, 559; Ottawa City Directory, 1939, 574.

<sup>22</sup> Ottawa City Directory, 1923, 809; Ottawa City Directory, 1924, 836; Ottawa City Directory, 1927, 686; Ottawa City Directory, 1928, 756-35; Ottawa City Directory, 1929, 775; Ottawa City Directory, 1934, 536; Ottawa City Directory, 1935, 557; Ottawa City Directory, 1936, 565.

vernacular style by incorporating a verandah, which was a prominent feature on historic turn-of-the-century cottages in Britannia, as well as featuring ornamental wood detailing in both the verandah and gabled dormers.

## Neighbourhood History

The village of Britannia slowly emerged in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century due to early settlers moving to farmland along the south side of the Ottawa River, and the completion of the Richmond Road connecting Bytown to Richmond in 1818, resulting in the establishment of nearby communities.<sup>23</sup> Around 1819, the shores of Lake Deschênes was granted to Captain John LeBreton, and the following year he settled and built a log cabin, and in 1826 he constructed a grist mill situated west of Main Street (currently Britannia Road), and called the area “Britannia.”<sup>24</sup> Combined with the access to the Ottawa River, the growth of the lumber industry, and in 1848 the opening of the Bytown and Britannia Railway Line, Britannia became a small industrial suburb of mill workers.<sup>25</sup> Nepean lumberman, Nelson G Robinson purchased LeBreton’s grist mill in 1846 and converted it into a carding mill by 1851, and operated a sawmill around the same time.<sup>26</sup>

In 1873, John McAmmond [or McAmmond] Jr purchased fifty-four acres of Concession 20 Lot 1, and had it surveyed and divided into sixty-five lots to sell as cottage properties.<sup>27</sup> Nelson G. Robinson’s mills, one by the rapids and one along the bay, were included in this purchase. A month later, John Cameron

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<sup>23</sup> Harold Kalman and John Roaf, *Exploring Ottawa: An Architectural Guide to the Nation's Capital*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), 154.

<sup>24</sup> Kalman and Roaf, *Exploring Ottawa*, 154; Tweedsmuir Histories, City of Ottawa Archives, MG165 Britannia Women’s Institute Vol 7, Pioneer Settlers Nelson G Robinson, 2.

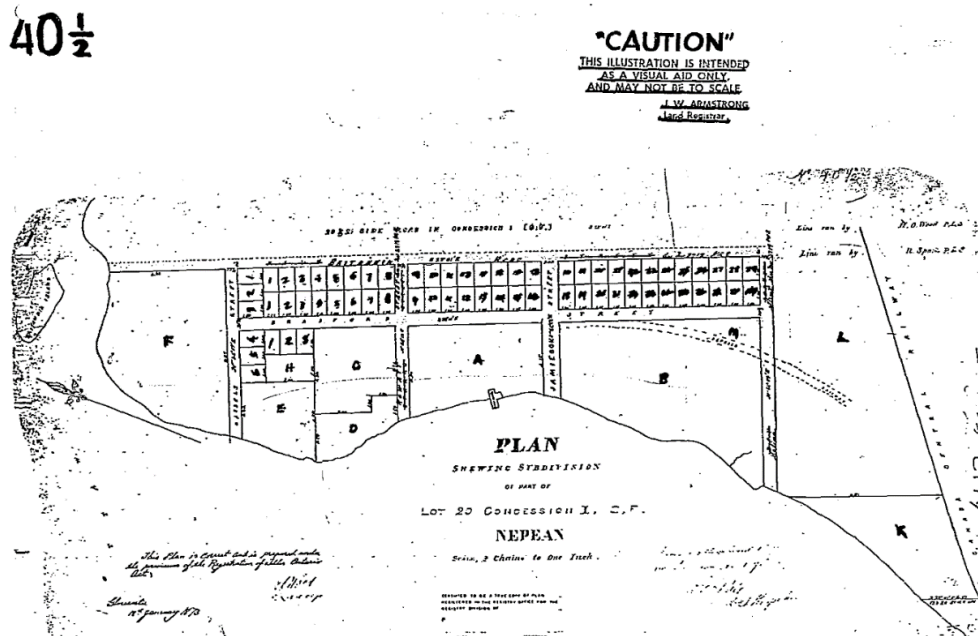
<sup>25</sup> City of Ottawa, “Neighbourhood Heritage Statement, Britannia – Crystal Bay,” 1.

<sup>26</sup> Kalman and Roaf, *Exploring Ottawa*, 154; William Henry Smith, *Canada: Past, Present and Future: Being A Historical, Geographical, Geological and Statistical Account of Canada West*, Volume II, (Toronto: 1851), accessed October 30, 2023, 356,

[https://www.google.ca/books/edition/Canada\\_Past\\_Present\\_and\\_Future/zjETAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=Smith,+W+H.,+Canada,+Past,+Present+and+Future&printsec=frontcover](https://www.google.ca/books/edition/Canada_Past_Present_and_Future/zjETAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=Smith,+W+H.,+Canada,+Past,+Present+and+Future&printsec=frontcover).

<sup>27</sup> Eva Taylor, *Ottawa’s Britannia*, (Ottawa: Britannia Historical Association, 1983), 38.

Jamieson, a baker on Wellington Street, purchased a large amount of McAmmond's land, including Block A and the mill by the bay with the intention of revitalization the mill operations.<sup>28</sup>



Block A located between Rowatt Street (formerly Sparks Street) and Jamieson Street. The existing structure on Block A may be Nelson G Robinson then J. C. Jamieson's mill. Source: "Ottawa-Carleton (04), Nepean, Book 70, Plan 40Y; Bradford; Cassels; Railway," Ontario Land Registry Access

<sup>28</sup> Taylor, *Ottawa's Britannia*, 38, 12, 96. Note: J C Jamieson's brother, Robert E Jamieson also owned Block A from 1874 to 1887, and it was when J C Jamieson took over his share that he began developing Britannia as a summer resort. "Ottawa-Carleton (04), Nepean, Book 70, Plan 40Y; Bradford; Cassels; Railway," Ontario Land Property Records Portal; "Old Time Stuff," *The Ottawa Citizen*, November 24, 1923, accessed October 17, 2023, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/455775065/?match=1>.



Old Mill, Jamieson's, Britannia, 1870, Source: City of Ottawa Archives, MG165-01-06, CA027942

Jamieson's attempt to revitalize the industries failed, likely due to the competition in Bytown's saturated lumber industry and the economic depression of the 1870s, so the mills closed in the 1880s.<sup>29</sup> With industrial operations ceased, J. C. Jamieson converted his sawmill, referred to as the "Old Mill," located on the lakefront between Jamieson Street and Sparks Street (currently Rowatt Street)<sup>30</sup> into residential apartments, along with one room on the second storey dedicated to a meeting space for the Britannia Aquatic Club with storage for boating craft on the first level.<sup>31</sup> The Old Mill even before the turn of the century was a community hub for social activities and events.

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<sup>29</sup> Taylor, *Ottawa's Britannia*, 41, 43, 62.

<sup>30</sup> Donald S. Kirby, *Historical Sketch of Britannia Yacht Club 1891-1967*, (Ottawa, Ontario: Britannia Yacht Club, 1967), 2. Noted that the sawmill was located 75 yards north of Jamieson Street, and the area bounded by Jamieson Street, Rowatt Street, and Bradford Street, was used as a piling ground.

<sup>31</sup> Taylor, *Ottawa's Britannia*, 12, 43, 96.





Flood waters at J. C. Jamieson's mill, Britannia, circa 1893,  
Source: City of Ottawa Archives, MG165-01-06, CA025473

Boating enthusiasts formed the Britannia Aquatic Club in 1887, renamed themselves the Britannia Nautical Club in 1891 and hosted their first annual regatta, incorporated in 1895 as the Britannia Boathouse Club, renamed to Britannia Boating Club in 1907, and adopted their current name the Britannia Yacht Club in 1950.<sup>32</sup> Club activities continued operating out of the “Old Mill” until 1896 when a new clubhouse was built on the current location, on the north side of Cassels on the west end. The club remains an integral part of the Britannia neighbourhood.

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<sup>32</sup> Taylor, *Ottawa's Britannia*, 43-44; John Grover, *Britannia Yacht Club: Historical Highlights 1887-1982*, (Ottawa: Runge Press, 1982), 16.



Britannia Club House circa 1896, Source: William James Topley, Library and Archives Canada, Topley Studio fonds, Item ID number: 3325416

With Jamieson's holdings in Britannia, he became the principal developer. He subdivided and sold land as cottage properties, constructed, and rented cottages and apartments, helped establish water infrastructure, and can be credited with Britannia's development.<sup>33</sup>

Many prominent individuals from Ottawa purchased land in Britannia and built cottages were also highly involved in the boat club such as John Cameron Jamieson, Edwin Lester Brittain, William Wyld, Thomas Halder Kirby, Dr. Mark G McElhinney, and Edmond Ebenezer Stockton.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> "Old Time Stuff," *The Ottawa Citizen*, November 24, 1923.

<sup>34</sup> Taylor, *Ottawa's Britannia*, 44.

Two churches opened, St. Stephen's Anglican in 1892 and St. Bonaventure's Roman Catholic in 1894, along with summer hotels such as the Chateau Von Charles in 1894 to serve the community and the summer resort visitors.<sup>35</sup>

Britannia's popularity in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century can be linked to Late Victorian views of a healthy lifestyle that including getting fresh air and physical activity found in the country or resort settings. Some individuals set up tents along the waterfront, others seasonally rented cottages, whereas Ottawa's wealthy bought property and built summer or year-round residences and took horse-drawn carriages or the Canadian Pacific Railway into the city for work.<sup>36</sup>

The Ottawa Electric Company (OER) operated its first streetcars in Ottawa in 1891, and in 1896, there were proposals to extend the line from the western end on Holland Avenue to Britannia.<sup>37</sup> Local residents initially opposed to the new line after witnessing how popular termini, such as Rockcliffe Park, were overwhelmed with summer visitors which would result in the area losing its tranquility and quaint atmosphere.<sup>38</sup> Come 1898, Britannia residents were not satisfied with the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) service and formed a committee to bring the streetcars to Britannia.<sup>39</sup> The committee consisted of community members including J. C. Jamieson, William Howe, A. N. McNeil, and F. W. Harmer.<sup>40</sup> Consensus was determined and the OER extended the tracks thirteen kilometers to the new Britannia-on-the-Bay station, running generally south of Richmond Road and parallel with the CPR.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Bruce S. Elliot, *The City Beyond: A History of Nepean, Birthplace of Canada's Capital, 1792-1990*, (Nepean: City of Nepean, 1991), 213-214.

<sup>36</sup> Elliot, *The City Beyond*, 191.

<sup>37</sup> Taylor, *Ottawa's Britannia*, 59.

<sup>38</sup> Taylor, *Ottawa's Britannia*, 59.

<sup>39</sup> "Britannia Ambitious: Residents Take Steps to Secure Electric Railway Extension," *The Ottawa Journal*, August 8, 1898, accessed October 17, 2023, <https://cityofottawaarchives.newspapers.com/image/43078065/>.

<sup>40</sup> "Britannia Ambitious: Residents Take Steps to Secure Electric Railway Extension."

<sup>41</sup> Bryan D. Cook, *Ahearn and Soper: The Electrification of Ottawa*, (Ottawa: The Historical Society of Ottawa, 2023), 39, accessed October 23, 2023, <https://dam-oclc.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/296291c4-db44-4afc-beba-130e9aded6b4>.



Streetcar, Britannia Village Stop, circa 1900-1909,  
Source: City of Ottawa Archives, MG165-01-02, CA018366

The public opening of the OER streetcars to the new end of the line at Britannia occurred on May 24<sup>th</sup>, the Victoria Day weekend in 1900.<sup>42</sup> To encourage weekend visitors to use their services, the OER built a fifty acre amusement park with extensive facilities and a T-shaped pier at “Britannia-on-the-Bay.”<sup>43</sup> Across North America in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, amusement parks built at the terminus of streetcar lines were gaining popularity, and they were known as “electric parks.”<sup>44</sup> Britannia Park included an auditorium seating seven hundred people, changing rooms, bathing houses, and two pavilions with concession stands.<sup>45</sup> The

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<sup>42</sup> Andrew Waldron, Harold Kalman, and Peter Coffman, *Exploring the Capital: An Architectural Guide to the Ottawa-Gatineau Region*, (Vancouver: Figure 1 Publishing: 2017), 183, 211.

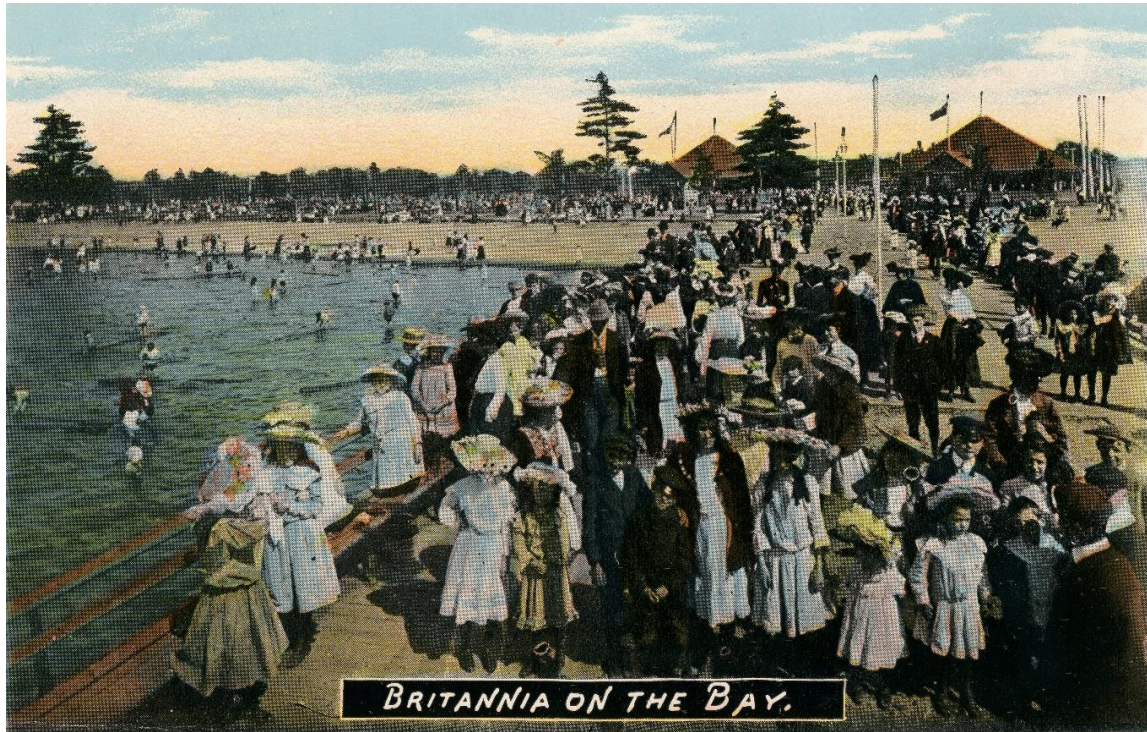
<sup>43</sup> Lisa Horwitz and Mark Horwitz, *The Natural Charm of Britannia: A Heritage Character Statement*, (Ottawa: City of Ottawa, 1996), 4.

<sup>44</sup> James Powell, “Britannia-on-the-Bay,” The Historical Society of Ottawa, accessed October 17, 2023, <https://www.historicalsocietyottawa.ca/publications/ottawa-stories/significant-technological-changes-in-the-city/britannia-on-the-bay-75>.

<sup>45</sup> Ottawa Neighbourhood Study, “Britannia Village,” accessed October 17, 2023, <https://www.neighbourhoodstudy.ca/906britannia-village/>.



auditorium hosted a variety of concerts, dances, and themed events such as “Venetian Nights” which brought thousands to the Park.<sup>46</sup>



Postcard, Britannia On The Bay, circa 1900-1918, Source: City of Ottawa Archives, MG366, CA027935. Note the beach, two octagonal pavilions, and the dense forest in the background

The OER extended the pier and added a new, larger “T” shape pier end, which now measured approximately 1000 feet in length and was electrically lit.<sup>47</sup> At the end of the pier, the OER built the new three storey building for the Britannia Boathouse Club that included boat storage below and a grandstand and a large ballroom above, which hosted a variety of social events.<sup>48</sup> Construction was complete in 1905, however due to ice damage in the spring of 1906, it was not until 1907 that club activities fully resumed at the new facility.<sup>49</sup> Unfortunately, a fire in August 1918 destroyed the clubhouse and all two hundred watercraft being

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<sup>46</sup> Taylor, *Ottawa's Britannia*, 346.

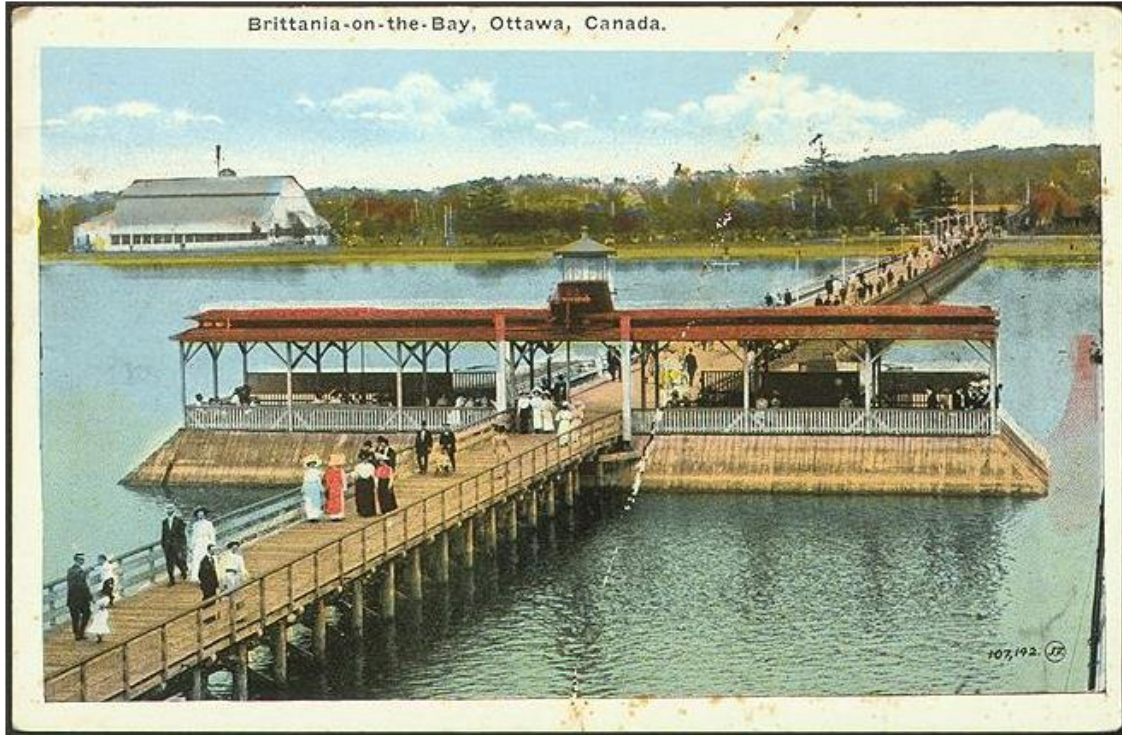
<sup>47</sup> Cook, *Ahearn and Soper: The Electrification of Ottawa*, 39.

<sup>48</sup> Horwitz and Horwitz, *The Natural Charm of Britannia*, 4.

<sup>49</sup> Kirby, *Historical Sketch of Britannia Yacht Club 1891-1967*, 4-5.



stored there, so the club resumed activities in the 1896 clubhouse, today's current location.<sup>50</sup>

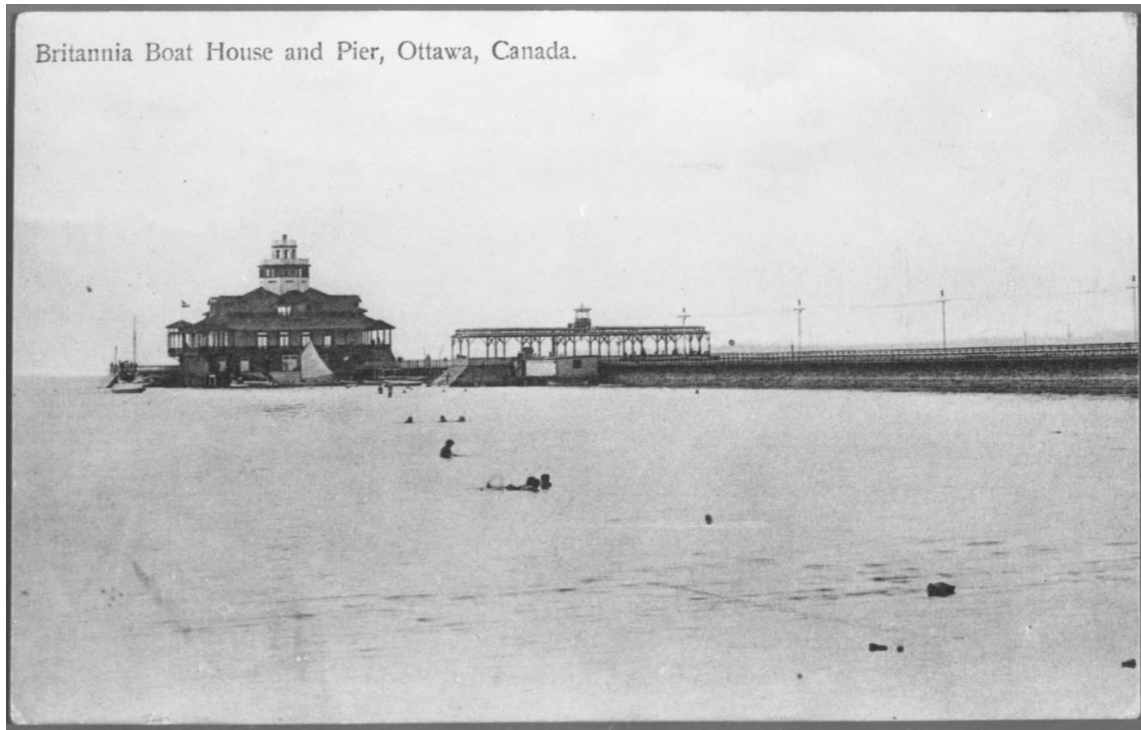


Postcard, Britannia-on-the-Bay, 1910, Source: Valentine & Sons, Toronto Public Library, Baldwin Collection of Canadiana, PCR-1980. Note in the foreground the original "T" shaped pier end built circa 1900 that was extended in 1905, with the Britannia Park auditorium in the background.

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<sup>50</sup> Horwitz and Horwitz, *The Natural Charm of Britannia*, 4





Postcard of Britannia Boat House clubhouse and pier, circa 1905-1918,  
Source: City of Ottawa Archives, MG237, CA015165



Britannia Canoe Club, circa 1905-1918. Source: City of Ottawa Archives, MG341, CA018975.  
See passenger steamer *G. B. Greene* in the right background.

The advent of the streetcars stimulated suburban development as the working class could commute daily between Britannia and Ottawa. Alternatively, those working in Ottawa would reside in the city Monday to Friday, then take the streetcar to visit their family for the weekend who permanently lived in Britannia. The OER was also accessible to the general public, and it is estimated ten thousand visitors took the streetcar to Britannia on opening day, and up to six thousand visited daily throughout the summer, especially for social events.<sup>51</sup> The popularity of Britannia as a resort and Britannia Park resulted in higher membership at the Britannia Boathouse Club. Around the turn of the century, the boating club was steadily growing and had approximately 120 members,<sup>52</sup> with about 200 members (resident and non-residents) in 1904,<sup>53</sup> and membership reached its peak before the First World War with over 600 active members in May 1913, and combined with social and associate memberships was over two thousand.<sup>54</sup> Therefore the popularity of Britannia as a summer resort is often associated with the period between 1900, when the streetcars were extended to the village, Britannia Park was constructed and open to the public, and the Britannia Boating Club had its largest membership, to before the First World War, and are known as its golden years.<sup>55</sup>

Between the World Wars, despite amusement parks becoming unfashionable, people still frequented the Britannia Park and the boat club.<sup>56</sup> However, with the accessibility of cars after the Second World War, Britannia's popularity as a summer resort deceased. Britannia retained its predominant cottage makeup until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century when many early structures were demolished to build residential infill for affordable housing for veterans.<sup>57</sup> Only a collection of original

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<sup>51</sup> Ottawa Neighbourhood Study, "Britannia Village."

<sup>52</sup> Grover, *Britannia Yacht Club: Historical Highlights 1887-1982*, 9-10; Kirby, *Historical Sketch of Britannia Yacht Club 1891-1967*, 4.

<sup>53</sup> Anson A. Gard, *The Hub and the Spokes: Or the Capital and its Environs*, (Ottawa: Emerson, 1904), 14.

<sup>54</sup> "History of Britannia Boat Club," *The Ottawa Journal*, May 17, 1913, accessed October 17, 2023, <https://cityofottawaarchives.newspapers.com/image/43190648/>.

<sup>55</sup> Kalman and Roaf, *Exploring Ottawa*, 155.

<sup>56</sup> Horwitz and Horwitz, *The Natural Charm of Britannia*, 4.

<sup>57</sup> Ottawa Neighbourhood Study, "Britannia Village."

summer cottages remain today which define the neighbourhood's early character.

In 1950, Britannia was annexed to the City of Ottawa, and in 1951 the city took over management and improvements to Britannia Park, which sparked a renewed popularity.<sup>58</sup> Although Britannia's popularity no longer compares to its golden years from 1900 to 1914, the area remains a summer destination for city residents, which harkens back to its early roots as a resort community.

## Context

Britannia is a unique neighbourhood in Ottawa, for its roots as a summer resort, its geography as a peninsula which led to connections to recreation and the Ottawa River, and its unique architectural character.

As noted above, Britannia's roots as a summer resort outside of the city developed in the 1880s to 1890s as a mix of camps, seasonal cottages, and year-round residences, and became an established community around the turn of the century. The Late Victorian desires of enjoying the outdoors for recreational purposes promoted the creation of summer resorts on both sides of the Ottawa River. In J. L. Gourlay's 1896 *History of the Ottawa Valley*, he documents, "Britannia of to-day is a small riverside retreat where distinguished citizens resort to for fresh air and bathing."<sup>59</sup> People were drawn to its natural surroundings and the ease of access to recreational activities on the water and land. This enticed many civil servants working in downtown Ottawa looking to leave the dusty city for Britannia's peaceful environment.

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<sup>58</sup> Horwitz and Horwitz, *The Natural Charm of Britannia*, 4.

<sup>59</sup> John Lowry Gourlay, *History of the Ottawa Valley: A Collection of Facts, Events and Reminiscences for Over Half a Century*, Ottawa: 1896, 62, <https://archive.org/details/historyofottawav00gouruoft/page/62/mode/2up>.



The growth and success of Britannia as a summer resort soared in 1900 onwards with the extension of the OER line, allowing working class people to move permanently to the growing suburb, along with the opening of Britannia Park which was patronized by thousands of visitors annually. Interestingly, the OER's Britannia Park and its streetcar line was unprofitable, however it was successful with the growth of Britannia Village as a suburb and its daily use by commuters travelling into the city.<sup>60</sup>



Postcard, Britannia-On-The-Bay, 1910, Source: Toronto Public Library, Baldwin Collection of Canadiana, PCR-1978. See mature pine trees in foreground and background and pier on the left.

Archaeological evidence demonstrates the presence of arrowheads of Algonquin First Nations near the Britannia peninsula.<sup>61</sup> The Old Indian Trail ran between the Rideau River and Ottawa River from Black Rapids [Lock 13] through what is now referred to as Hog's Back, to the head of the Deschênes Rapids.<sup>62</sup> Known as the "village by the rapids," Britannia peninsula is located west of Ottawa on the

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<sup>60</sup> Cook, *Ahearn and Soper: The Electrification of Ottawa*, 40.

<sup>61</sup> Harold Kalman and John Roaf, *Exploring Ottawa: An Architectural Guide to the Nation's Capital*, 154.

<sup>62</sup> "Britannia Once Enlivened by Songs and Shouts of Rivermen: Quiet Old Village Was Busy Place Half a Century Ago," *The Ottawa Citizen*, May 19, 1934, accessed October 12, 2023, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/456442917/>.



Ottawa River, at the southwest end of Lac Deschênes, with the Deschênes Rapids to the north. Given its geographical location, the peninsula was likely used by voyageurs and loggers alike to portage the rapids.<sup>63</sup> The original landscape was largely wooded with pine trees with swampy areas, a landscape that can be still seen today in the mature trees and in nearby Mud Lake, a provincially significant wetland.

Britannia Bay with its harbour, gently sloped shoreline, and calm waters provided a suitable area for recreational activities such as bathing, fishing, a variety of boating, with a wonderful view of the Gatineau Hills. Many campers and residents set their tents or cottages by the shore among the pines, owned watercraft, and spent their leisure time on the water. This portion of the Ottawa River was a popular destination for summer leisure activities and from 1896 to 1916, the steamer *G. B. Greene* regularly took passengers between Britannia and Alymer and Chat's Falls.<sup>64</sup>

Britannia's growth as a community corresponds to the popularity of water activities and the formal organization by local residents of the Britannia Aquatic Club in 1887. In 1891, the club had enough interest to organize races and events including an annual regatta, which continued until 1918.<sup>65</sup> The formation and popularity of the boating club correlates to Britannia's development in the early 1890s which saw the construction of seasonal and year-round cottages, two churches, and boarding houses and summer hotels.<sup>66</sup> In the summer of 1896, the new boating clubhouse was completed located on its current site, and Britannia's summer resident list was the largest yet,<sup>67</sup> and the following summer the

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<sup>63</sup> Britannia Yacht Club, *Britannia Yacht Club: A History of Water, Place And People, 1887-2012*, (Ottawa: Britannia Yacht Club, 2013), 18.

<sup>64</sup> Bill McKeown, *Ottawa's Streetcars: An Illustrated History of Electric Railway Transit in Canada's Capital*, (Pickering: Railfare DC Books, 2006), 75.

<sup>65</sup> Britannia Yacht Club, *Britannia Yacht Club: A History of Water, Place And People, 1887-2012*, 40.

<sup>66</sup> Taylor, *Ottawa's Britannia*, 53-55.

<sup>67</sup> "Still Has A Charm: Britannia Holds Its Own As A Summer Resort," *The Ottawa Journal*, August 5, 1896, accessed October 10, 2023, <https://cityofottawaarchives.newspapers.com/image/43432067/>.

community is called, “one of the best known and generally patronized resort of Ottawa citizens.”<sup>68</sup>

The architectural character of Britannia’s early buildings is unique in Ottawa. Characteristics of Britannia’s vernacular cottages include a simple box or L-shaped form, one and a half storeys, and horizontal lap siding and shingle cladding. The turn of the century vernacular cottage style included the addition and significance of a verandah on the front façade or wrapping multiple façades, which can be seen by comparing early versions such as 48 Bradford Street, constructed circa 1863, to several properties built around the turn of the century such as 195 Britannia Road, 73 Britannia Road, 2775 Rowatt Street, and 95 Kirby Road. Verandahs provided an enlivened addition to the simple form and fulfilled the Late Victorian desire to get fresh air and have transitional living spaces between the interior and exterior.<sup>69</sup>

Architectural styles evident in Britannia include Late Victorian (127 Britannia Road), Queen Anne Revival (154 Britannia Road, 66 Bradford Street, and 84 Bradford Street), and Shingle Style (175 Britannia Road and 95 Kirby Road). Both the vernacular and high style architecture found in Britannia have related approaches in that they feature a verandah, use similar construction materials, and ornamentation features. Since Britannia was a recreational community that gradually formed rather than being a planned development, most buildings constructed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century during Britannia’s peak are on large property lots with mature trees, have informal landscaping, and irregular setbacks, which also contributes to the area’s character.

73 Britannia Road is linked to Britannia’s contextual values. The house was built during Britannia’s peak as a summer resort, and is located on the side of

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<sup>68</sup> “At Cool Retreats: Those Out for The Summer, Resorts Convenient to Ottawa are Popular,” *The Ottawa Journal*, August 19, 1897, accessed October 10, 2023, <https://cityofottawaarchives.newspapers.com/image/43908553/>.

<sup>69</sup> Horwitz and Horwitz, *The Natural Charm of Britannia*, 6.

Britannia Road, which was an additional plan to satisfy the early growth of the community. The building was initially used as a seasonal cottage and was later converted into a permanent residence. The original structure demonstrated Britannia's vernacular style before the turn of century, as a simple box, wooden structure. The addition of the Craftman style deep verandah and central dormer with gable ornamentation circa 1922 are characteristic of Britannia's vernacular style during its peak as a summer resort which prominently featured a transitional space and had a respect for craftsmanship and detailing.

## Evaluation using Ontario Regulation 09/06

1	<i>The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.</i>	Yes  Constructed circa 1912, the building at 73 Britannia Road is a representative example of the vernacular cottage style found throughout Britannia, built during a time when the area was a summer resort destination. These modest buildings typically feature a simple form, wood horizontal lap siding, a wraparound verandah, and ornamentation on roof elements. These physical characteristics demonstrate the Late Victorian desire for modest and functional seasonal cottages outside the city, that had a strong focus on transitional spaces from the exterior to the interior.
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		<p>The house was altered around 1922, adding a wide, open verandah with thick squared columns with cobblestone bases, and prominent central gable, giving the cottage a Craftsman appearance. The property exemplifies Victorian and cottage elements in its square form, and one and a half storey height. The building is clad in wood horizontal lap siding and features simple millwork in the verandah gable and dormer. This ornamentation demonstrates the pride in craftsmanship that was prevalent during this period of construction.</p>
2	<i>The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.</i>	No
3	<i>The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of technical or scientific merit.</i>	No

4	<p><i>The property has historical or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.</i></p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>The property and house were associated with the Murphy family, who were year-round residents of Britannia during its golden period, and they played a notable role in their community. From 1910 to 1912, lot five was owned by Edward E. Murphy, of the Murphy Brothers, who built several architecturally distinguished residences in Britannia and defined the vernacular cottage style. This included constructing 154 Britannia Road for their sister, Emma Murphy, who resided there until she married James Edmund Hodgins. In 1912, the couple moved into 73 Britannia Road and resided there throughout Britannia's golden</p>

		<p>period as a summer resort until 1917. Emma Murphy throughout her life living in Britannia was highly involved in the local community by volunteering with several organizations.</p>
5	<p><i>The property has historical or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.</i></p>	No
6	<p><i>The property has historical or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.</i></p>	No
7	<p><i>The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.</i></p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>The property has contextual value as it maintains the summer resort character of the area. The building was constructed during Britannia's golden period from 1900 to 1914. Its architectural style, with its Craftsman influences, materials and setback, contribute to supporting Britannia's early cottage character. Numerous</p>

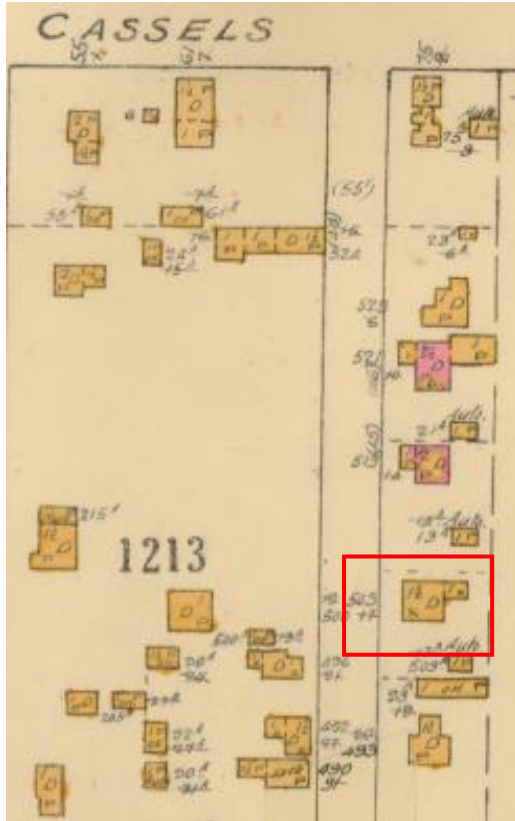
		<p>other remaining cottages in Britannia are also designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, including 48, 154 and 175 Britannia Road.</p>
8	<p><i>The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings</i></p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>The property is historically linked to the growth and success of Britannia Village as a summer resort, with the extension of the Ottawa Electric Railway reaching Britannia in 1900 allowing working class people to move permanently to the growing suburb. The expansion of the OER's Britannia line coincided with the opening of Britannia Park, stimulating thousands to visit the village annually. However, it was the daily commuters travelling on the streetcar to the city who made it a</p>



		<p>success. 73 Britannia Road was built in 1912 during Britannia's height as a popular summer resort from 1900 to 1914.</p> <p>Britannia's growth as a community corresponds to the popularity of water activities and the formal organization by local residents of the Britannia Aquatic Club in 1887. The formation and popularity of the boating club correlates to Britannia's development in the early 1890s which saw the construction of seasonal and year-round cottages, two churches, and summer hotels.</p>
9	<i>The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.</i>	No

## Supplementary Photos and Maps

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Aerial view of 73 Britannia Road, with prominent verandah and dormer visible, and wooded lot, Source: GeoOttawa, 1991



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