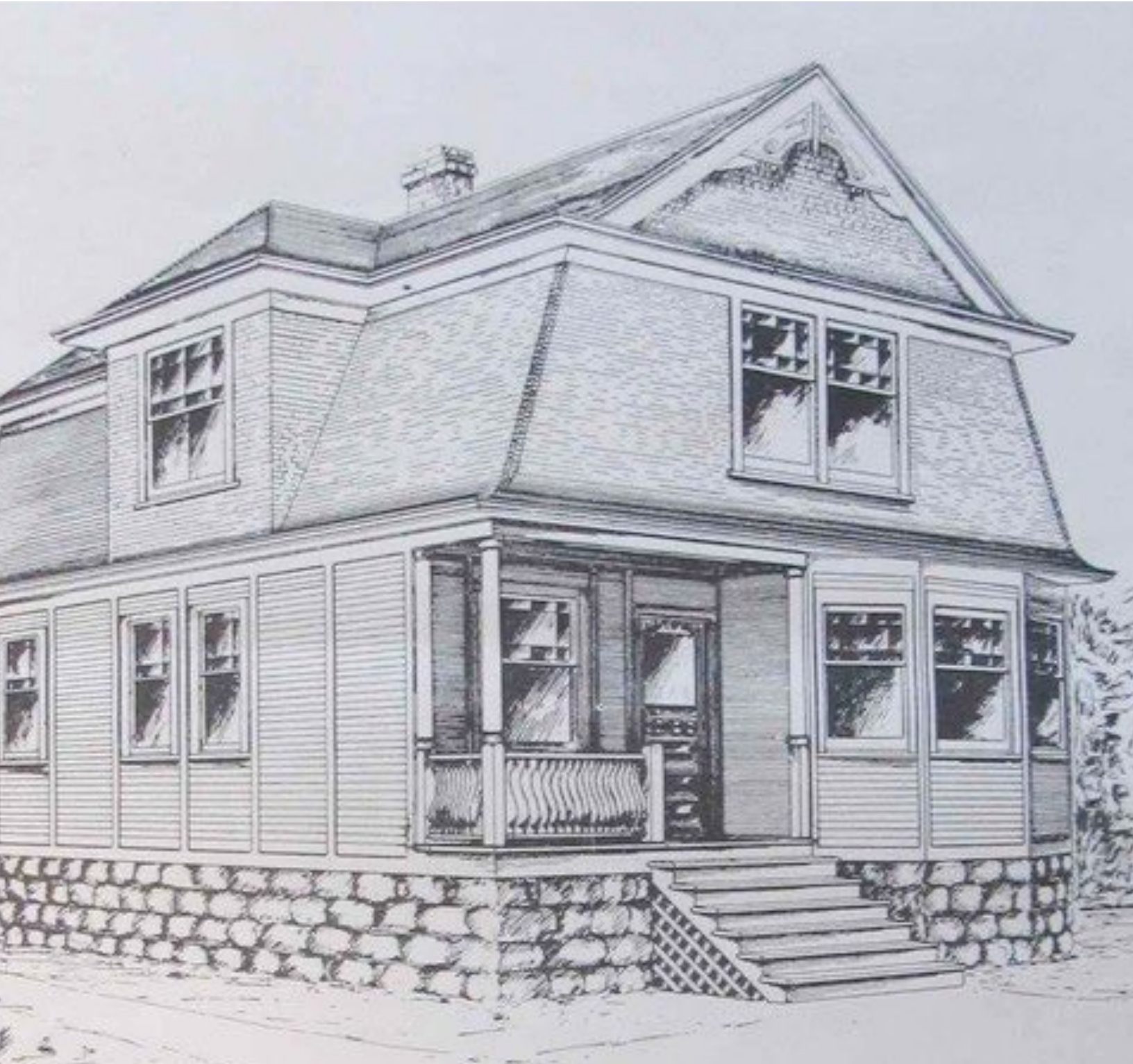


Heritage Conservation Plan

Christ Church Rectory 561 4th Avenue, Fernie BC - 1909



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Statement of Significance

561 4th Avenue, Fernie BC



Description of Historic Place

The Christ Church rectory at 561 4th Avenue is a BC Mills Timber and Trading Company Ltd. (BCMTT Co.) Model MMM 'ready made' house with gambrel roof, and shallow cant bay situated on the lot immediately south of the Christ Church building at the south west corner of 4th Avenue and 6th Street.

Heritage Value

The Christ Church rectory is valued as an example of the response taken by individuals and organizations in rebuilding after the devastating August 1, 1908 fire that levelled much of the city. Christ Church's Vestry Committee noting that Knox Church had already built a 'ready made' Model MMM for their priest decided on August 31, 1908 to proceed with the procurement of a similar house from the BCMTT Co.

The Vancouver-based firm's patented system of sectional houses, unveiled in 1904, offered a quick method of constructing residential and institutional buildings that accompanied the

rapid settlement of Western Canada. For Fernie residents the system offered a quick route to rebuilding after the fire.

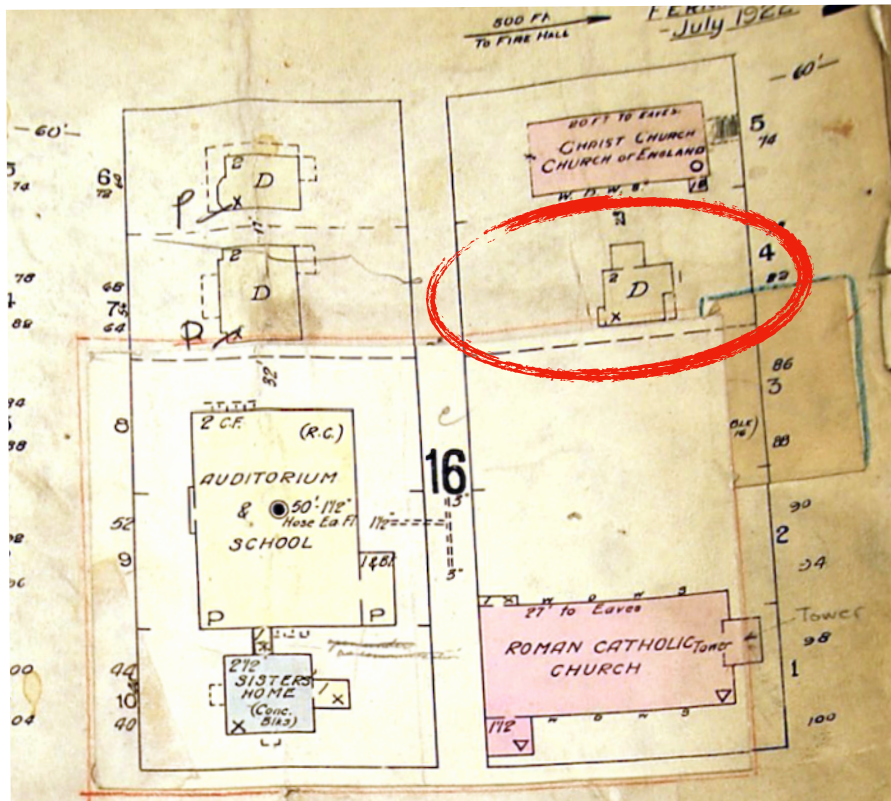
The Rectory is valued as one of over a dozen BCMTT Co. houses all built immediately after the fire that represents one of the largest collections of these 'ready made' houses in British Columbia.

Additionally, value is found with the continued ownership of the house by the Anglican Diocese of Kootenay as other religious institutions have sold or demolished their rectories. As of June 2018, the Rectory is no longer used to house the priest, however capacity to provide housing for a minister remains a strong value in the Christ Church community. To that end the Church Committee of the early 2000s consolidated the lots, making a future sale of the rectory unlikely.

Character Defining Elements

- continuous residential use since construction
- the residential form, scale and massing of a BCMTT Co. model MMM as expressed in its two storey height, modified gambrel roof with side dormers, shallow cant bay and original window openings
- original front door repositioned at the rear of the house
- 1917 addition to the north side
- interior items include balustrade, window and door trim, and doors

Maps



Fire insurance map 1922, updated to 1948 showing the Rectory next to the Anglican Church. Source: BC Archives 10476A



Aerial photo from 2015 showing the rectory and church. Source: Apple maps

Background and Construction Chronology

The original Anglican Church built in 1898 at 3rd Avenue and 5th Street, had a 'vestry' constructed in 1899 as well. Both buildings were destroyed in the Fernie fire of 1904. Two new lots (the current site) were secured at the corner of 4th Avenue and 6th Street where a new church was built in 1905, along with a rectory, at the very same location as the current church and rectory. It served the community until it too was consumed by the 1908 conflagration.



Postcard photographed by Spalding of the second Christ Church in Fernie constructed in 1905 and destroyed by fire in 1908, with rectory next door, both standing in the location of today's church and rectory. Source: Fernie Museum 3712

With the fire of August 1908 most of the city of Fernie was destroyed, including the above illustrated second church for the Anglican congregation. Rebuilding efforts were quick to get off the ground. The vestry committee of Christ Church began looking at rebuilding the church in brick, but their first priority was to provide suitable accommodation for their priest. After reviewing quotes from local builders for a small two-room cottage, they decided to copy the example of Knox Presbyterian that had contracted the Standard House Building and Contracting Company of Vancouver to supply a BCMTT Co. 'ready-made' house. The MMM model was shipped from Vancouver by rail and erected next to the church.

The Vestry Committee of Christ Church was impressed by the speed of construction and the permanent nature of the 'ready-made' system and decided to order an identical model MMM from the company. The MMM model was one of the BCMTT Co's more popular designs. The Vancouver-based firm's patented 'ready made' sectional house system was unveiled in 1904 at the Royal Winnipeg Fair and offered well built, prefabricated but permanent houses. The exteriors were standardized designs but the interiors were flexible and easily adapted for the individual needs of the purchaser.

The house in its original form with its distinctive modified gambrel roof, was shingled on the upper floor while the lower floor was distinguished by narrow lap siding set in between vertical battens which were the sectional panels that made up the prefabricated system.

The 4-foot wide panels arrived on site with exterior paint applied at the factory, insulation and the initial wall covering. The construction was straightforward. The panels were set into and bolted to the sill that sat on the foundation, and as each panel was added, it was bolted to its neighbour and the sill. With this method the house was complete in short order, usually in no more than 2 days.

The contract with G.A. Hacking, the Standard House Building and Contracting Company's agent and contractor, called for the Vestry committee to prepare the site and provide the foundation for the house that would be "completed outside as shown on the elevation plan, the outside painting to be as it leaves the factory". The furnace and lighting fixtures were to be supplied by the church and the contractor provided the plumbing fixtures, boiler and necessary wiring and piping. For the interior, the contract specified that the walls were to "plastered one coat wood fibre plaster, 1/2 fibre, 1/2 sand. Inside finish is one coat filler and one coat of varnish."

Mr. Hacking wore many hats. In Vancouver he was involved in banking and brokerage, the lumber business and general contracting. In 1908 he became the sole sales agent for the BCMTT Co. building system and he managed to do very good business in Fernie selling over a dozen of the company's houses as the city rebuilt after the fire.

The rectory served as the home for the Christ Church priests until 2018. Over the decades the house has been renovated a few times with the front porch enclosed and minor additions made to the rear. The biggest change was in 1917 when a two storey addition was added to the north side to accommodate Reverend Yolland, his wife Ada and their eight children.

Not all of those who resided there were happy, one departing priest in 1949 admonished the Vestry committee on the condition of the house saying that it "is in deplorable condition through a lack of repair and maintenance... No clergy will continue to live in it in its present state." That said, modernization and repair has occurred over the years in a variety of areas including the kitchen, providing insulation, new siding and windows along with the demolition of the chimney to attic level and the provision of a door in the porch enclosure to access the church office while not disturbing the tenants.

Historic Photographs



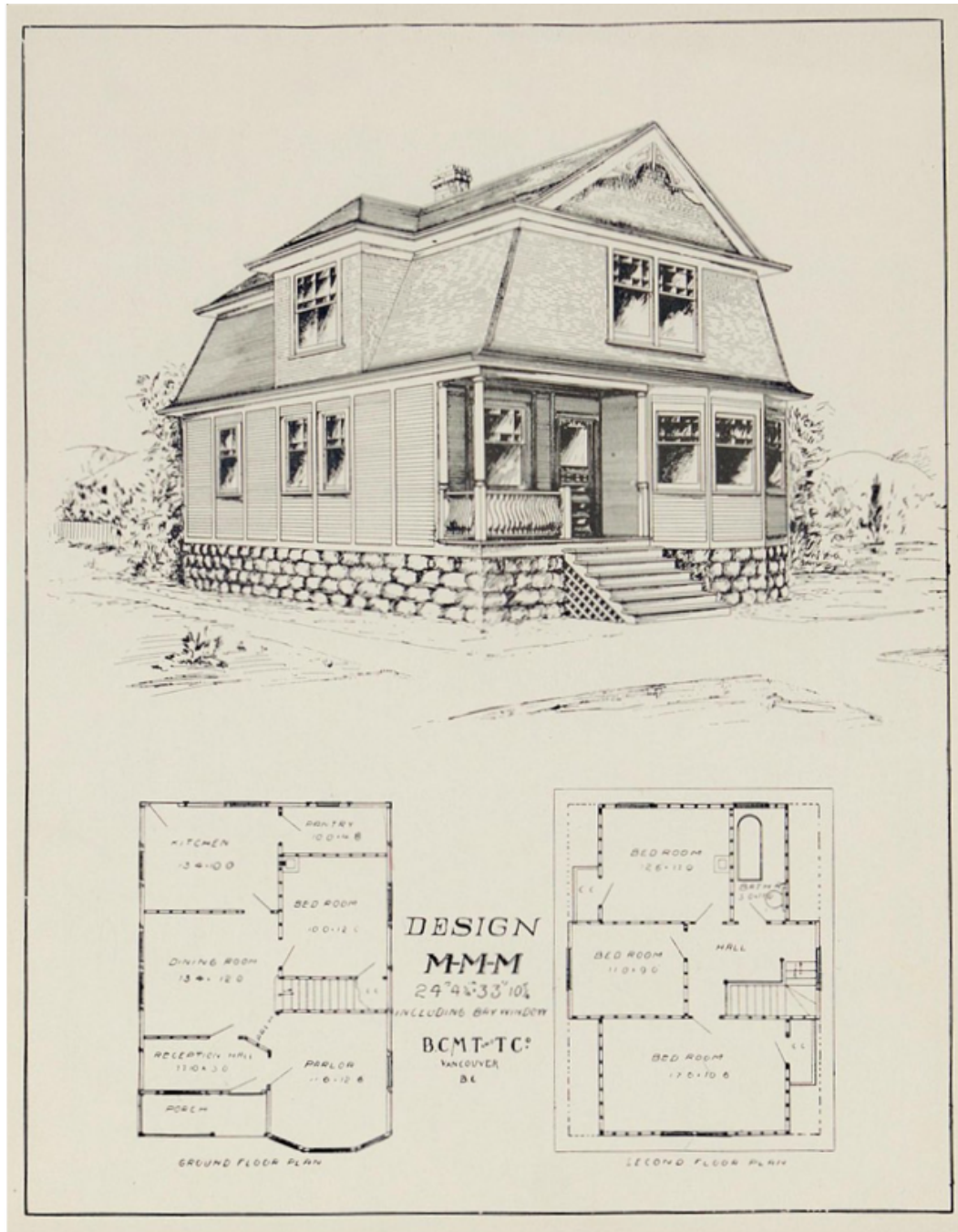
There are no known photographs of the rectory except where it has been caught on the edge of photographs taken of other buildings. The above image was taken in 1909 from the roof of the Catholic Church temporary church and shows a portion of the south side and rear of the rectory.

Because the house was specified to be built as the elevation plan provided by the BCMTT Co. other examples of the MMM model can show what the house would have looked like when built.

When Knox Church was photographed in the 1930s (left) their MMM rectory was captured in the frame and clearly shows the porch details, window arrangement, fretwork in the gable and the general colour scheme of a dark upper body with the lighter base.

Top: the basement of Christ Church under construction in 1909, and the rectory, marked with an arrow already completed. Source: Fernie Museum 0103-01

Bottom: Knox United rectory - photographed between 1936 and 1942. Source: Fernie Museum & Archives FMP09414A



Model MMM from the 1905 BCMTT Co. catalogue pages 44-45 .
Note the distinctive vertical battens which hide the bolts that hold the panels together. The floor plans were illustrative and the interiors could be modified to a degree to suit an owner's needs. The catalogue can be viewed online at <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcbooks/items/1.0221963#p76z-2r0f>:
Source: UBC Special Collections

Current Photographs



Top left: the front of the house facing 4th Avenue

Top right: south side of the house

Bottom left: rear of the house

Bottom right: the front door as seen in the 1905 catalogue



Photo of the front of the rectory showing the 1917 addition circled



Photo of the back of the rectory showing the 1917 addition, and the current location of the original wood front door, now serving as a door to the basement.

Condition Assessment

The rectory is a two storey plus basement house built using the BC Mills Timber and Trading Company's patented sectional system. The MMM design featured a modified gambrel roof, small front porch, shallow cant bay and side dormers. The house had a significant addition to the north side in 1917. The porch has been enclosed and a covered entrance has been added to the rear for access to the basement. The original front door was moved to this entrance. Vinyl siding was added to the house in the 1970s and at the same time most of the windows were replaced.

Overall the house is in good condition. There is some loose vinyl siding on the south side along the top of the foundation. Paint is needed on all of the wood work and the relocated front door. The rear enclosed porch needs some carpentry attention.

The interior has been renovated, though a number of original doors and trim remain as does the staircase and balustrade. Some door hardware and cast iron furnace vents remain in situ.

There is a slope to the floor in the dining area and ceiling tiles are hanging loose at the wall between the front sitting room, stair case and dining area.

The basement is dry and the foundation appears to be sound with only minimal cracks in the concrete.



Left: Original balustrade and staircase on the interior of the rectory.

Middle and right: The few original wood windows and exterior trim pieces can be scraped down to find the original colour scheme. At first glance the windows and doors appear to have been a very dark, almost black green and the trim was painted in cream.

Conservation Objectives

Preservation is the overall conservation objective for Christ Church's rectory.

The rectory will continue on its original site on 4th Avenue on the south side of the church. No additions are currently proposed for the site. All Character Defining Elements as identified in the Statement of Significance will be preserved. The rectory will continue to serve as rental accommodation for future priests or community residents. There are no plans for renovation or alterations outside of general maintenance or repair.

Given the unique nature of the rectory as an example of the MMM model from the BCMTT Co. the house should be maintained with no alterations or disruption of the existing vinyl siding that is protecting the original cladding and details of the 1908, house which along with the external elevations available from the 1904 catalogue provides the foundation for the rectory's accurate restoration at a future date.

While the interior has been renovated much of the trim, moulding and doors have survived and these should be maintained as Character Defining Elements.

The conservation treatment definitions below are taken from the Standards & Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (2nd edition):

Preservation: The action or process of protecting, maintaining and/or stabilizing the existing materials, form and integrity of a historic place or of an individual component, while protecting its heritage value.

Restoration: The action or process of accurately revealing, recovering or representing the state of a historic place or of an individual component, as it appeared at a particular period in its history, while protecting its heritage value.

Rehabilitation: The action or process of making possible a continuing or compatible contemporary use of a historic place or of an individual component, through repair, alterations, and/or additions, while protecting its heritage value.

Recommended Conservation Procedures

For all work use experienced trades with proven experience working on historic buildings.

The overall program is one of maintenance of the existing structure. All work and repairs should be undertaken with care and from the point of view of not disturbing any of the original 1909 fabric of the house. Any alteration no matter how minor should be done with consideration of its impact on the rectory's future restoration.

Woodwork including window trim and the original front door (at the rear of the house) should be painted. Loose vinyl siding should be reattached and any opening around the foundation and rear deck should be sealed.

Research Resources

BC Archives: Archival photographs, Fire Insurance Plan for Fernie 1922-1956.

BC Mills Timber and Trading Company Ltd. catalogue of patented ready made houses, 1904, Vancouver Archives (PAM Und. 507) and UBC Special Collections (<https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcbooks/items/1.0221963#p76z-2r0f>.)

Christ Church 75th Anniversary (1973) booklet

Christ Church archives: Historic documents, Vestry committee minutes, rectory contract with the Standard House Building and contracting company

Fernie archival newspapers (newspaper articles from Fernie Ledger, Fernie Free Press and other archival editions)

Fernie Historical Association. 1967. Backtracking With Fernie Historical Association.

Fernie Museum: Archival photographs, Inventory listing for Christ Church and Rectory

Fernie Free Press Souvenir Editions Christmas 1902 and 1905. UBC Special Collections.

Fernie Progress magazine. 1909. Vancouver Public Library Special Collections.

Parks Canada - The B.C. Mills Prefabricated System: The Emergence of Ready-made Buildings in Western Canada by G. E. Mills and D. W. Holdsworth (<http://parkscanadahistory.com/series/chs/14/chs14-2f.htm>)

Vancouver Daily World - archival newspaper

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