

*Township
Walking Tours*



Walking Tour Five: Lamson St – Highrock Park

Note: This walk has steep climbs.

Begin the walk at Lamson Street School. The first Lamson Street School was a four-room brick building constructed in 1903. Architect William Ridgeway Wilson was hired to supervise construction. In 1909, the building was deemed too small and plans to add a second story were put in place. Architect Maxwell Muir was hired to prepare the design. The 1903 walls were found to be unsafe. A contract was awarded to Thomas Ashe to build a new eight-room school. In 1913, the plans of architect W. Ridgeway Wilson were selected for two new wings and an addition. The school reopened 9 April 1914. It closed in 1976, was given heritage designation in 1990 and reopened in 1993 after being completely restored by the Greater Victoria School District. Architect and Engineer Paul Smith supervised the work. It closed again as a public school in 2007.

Across the intersection on the northeast corner – 948 Old Esquimalt Road, “Brierly,” was built in 1904/05 for Richard Jones, the Inland Revenue Collector. In 1915, Norman Yarrow, the son of Sir Alfred Yarrow, purchased the house and renamed it “Fairmont.” Sir Alfred purchased the B.C. Marine Railway Co. in 1914 renaming it Yarrows Ltd. Norman managed the



Lamson Street School

shipyard for 32 years. It is thought that architect Samuel Maclure designed the house. Alterations and additions were done by Maclure in 1917.

Continue north on Lamson Street. In 1913, Philip Austin built 721 Lamson Street as a wedding present for his bride Dorothy Leeming. Austin was an Esquimalt Councillor in 1916. He also served as the Acting Consul for the French Consulate.

727 Lamson Street was built in 1893 by Henry Nixon and sold to Leonard and Charlotte Leigh. Leonard, an undertaker by profession, came to Canada from the USA in 1887. Leonard Jr. was a founding partner of Leigh & Cuthbertson Confectionery in Vancouver. The house, one of the oldest in Esquimalt, was designated heritage in 1990.

In 1907, Henry Nixon built 729 Lamson Street for Leonard and Charlotte Leigh. In 1913 the house was sold to Rev. Canon Harry W.G. Stocken, an Anglican Minister. Rev. Stocken developed a written language for the Blackfoot Indians and printed Bibles for them on a printing press in the basement. Rev. Stocken was instrumental in having Memorial Park created.

733 Lamson Street was built in 1908 by George Munro who sold it in 1911 to George Simpson McTavish and his wife Lillian Gurd. George was the great grandson of Sir George Simpson, the Governor of the Hudson’s Bay Company for 40 years. Lillian was the daughter of the founder of the Gurd Ginger-Ale Company.

They called their house “Owee-Kay-No” to honour the people from Kwa-Kwa-Me on Schooner’s Passage who were all killed in 1848. The name was inscribed on wrought iron gates that formed part of the stone fence made from rock that Lillian had blasted out from under the house one summer while George was at River’s Inlet Cannery. The house is now part of “Firgrove,” owned and managed by the Capital Region Housing Corporation.

Cross Lamson Street at the E&N Railway and proceed to Matheson Avenue. Walk up Matheson Avenue and enter Highrock Park via the footpath.



Clockwise from left: **727, 729 and 733 Lamson Street**

Cross the field and take the path to Cairn Park. At 232.25 feet, it is the highest point of land in Esquimalt. The Cairn was dedicated in 1962 during Esquimalt's Golden Jubilee year.

Municipal Engineer John Graeme designed the stone cairn and directional dais. Enjoy the wrap-around view! The Veterans' Cemetery National Historic Site, called "God's Acre" can be seen to the west. Access to the Cemetery is off Colville Road. It is open daily for visitors.

Return to Old Esquimalt Road by the back path to the right off Cairn Road. This path follows the survey line that divided Viewfield and Constance Cove Farm, established in the 1850s by the Puget Sound Agricultural Company, a subsidiary of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Take the paved path south to historic Old Esquimalt Road, the oldest planned road in the west built in 1852 by the sailors of *HMS Thetis* under the direction of Lt. John Moresby, later Admiral Moresby. The Captain of the ship was Captain Kuper. Both men have Islands, Moresby Island and Kuper Island, named after them.

Cross Old Esquimalt Road and take the path through Phil Ross Park named to honour the late Rev. Philip Ross, a United church Minister and an Esquimalt Councillor from 1983 to 1990.

Turn left on Fernhill Road named for "Fernhill," the residence of Charles E. and Elizabeth Fisher Pooley once located on 26 acres in this area. The 22-room house was demolished after a fire in 1932.

Walk to Lampson Street. Lampson Street is named for the *Lady Lampson*, a Hudson's Bay Company vessel.

Make a left turn on Lampson Street. Across the street, 657 Lampson Street, called "Windford," was designed by architect John Gerhard Tiarks in 1894.



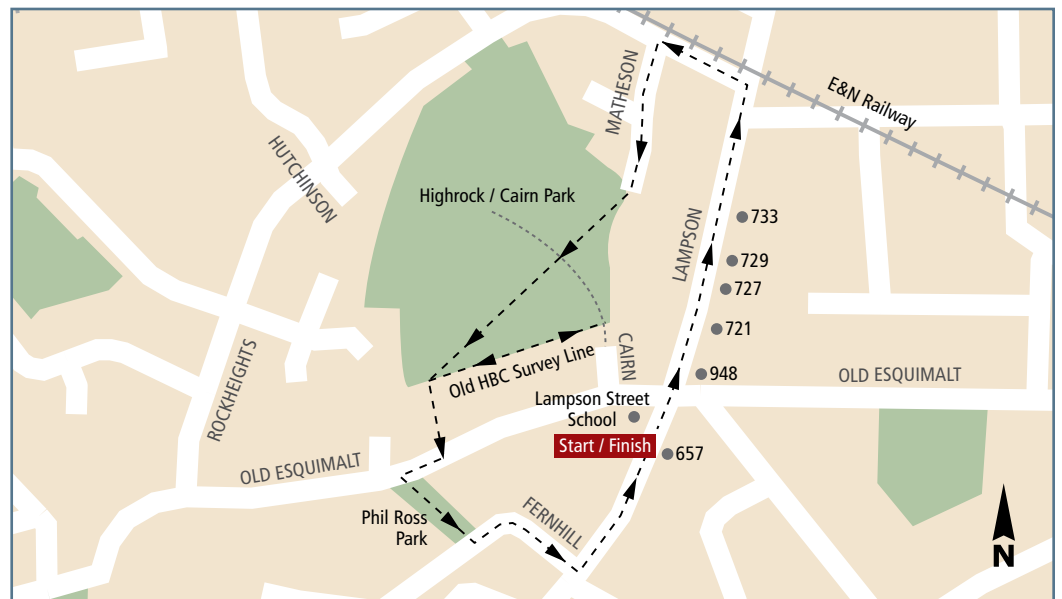
Original Fernhill, 8 rooms (top) and Expanded Fernhill, 22 rooms (bottom)

The first resident was Robert Milne Jeffrey, a cashier for the E&N Railway. In 1983 this house was the first house in Esquimalt to receive heritage designation.

Return to Lampson Street School. The walk ends here.



View From Cairn Park



Written by Sherri K. Robinson. Photos: Esquimalt Municipal Archives and Josh McCulloch.