

Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site of Canada



History

Since its construction in 1894, the Gulf of Georgia Cannery has been a landmark for fishermen. This historic site commemorates Canada's West Coast fishing industry. It has been used as a cannery, reduction plant, and net loft.

Buildings

The Gulf of Georgia Cannery is a complex of buildings constructed between 1894 and 1964 in response to changing technology and the needs of the industry. They include the main cannery building, icehouse, vitamin oil shed, drum storage shed, watchman's house and lead foundry. The structures are of wood frame and heavy timber construction and are supported, for the most part, by wooden pilings. The built area is 4,673 square metres.

Collections

The Gulf of Georgia Cannery artifact collection is comprised of approximately 10,000 objects. These include items relating primarily to salmon, herring, and halibut fisheries. The Gulf of Georgia Cannery also has in the collection an assortment of canning machinery dating back to 1900, an ice making machine, and in-situ machinery used to reduce herring into fish meal and oil products. The collection has been inventoried and photographed. Cataloguing work has begun in CHIN format and is being up-loaded on a computer database for local use on site.

Conservation

A variety of treatment approaches have been used to stabilize and conserve in-situ historical industrial equipment. The equipment in the Cannery is composed primarily of ferrous metal and resides in an environment of perpetually high humidity. Recent testing of blasting mediums such as corn cob grit, walnut grit, acrylic grit, and sodium bicarbonate were carried out on site. Several corrosion inhibitors are also being tested in both indoor and outdoor conditions.

Stabilization of in-situ machinery in the herring reduction plant began in 1988 in several areas throughout the plant. In 1995/96, conservation work in the Cannery continued in the Evaporator Room and Boiler House. Further stabilization and treatment will occur in the herring reduction plant as funds become available. Basic conservation treatments have occurred for small artifacts presently on exhibit.

Archaeology

The archaeological resources at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery are related primarily to the human history of the West Coast fishing industry. Resources are located in the inter-tidal area beneath the Cannery structures and in upland areas north and east of the Cannery.

Cultural Landscape

The Cannery's setting in the village of Steveston is part of a rich cultural landscape shaped by the development of the fishing industry. The richness of this historical context contributes to the value and significance of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site. Key features of the cultural landscape include: the historic dyke on the northeast side of the Cannery; adjacent fishing industry structures and activities such as boat moorage; the Cannery's physical relationship to the village and the river; and the industrial nature of the area.

The Cannery and other historic site buildings are only part of a larger complex of structures which are both historically and thematically related. These structures include the seine loft, gillnet loft, the driveways and front wharf. They are owned by the Small Craft Harbours Branch of Fisheries and Oceans.

The significance of these structures is derived from their continued use by the fishing industry, their physical character, and traditional forms and finishes. An agreement is in place with Fisheries and Oceans to ensure sensitive management of these structures.

Student Prices:

Powell River Secondary Students - \$60.00

Powell River Elementary Students - \$55.00

Lower Peninsula Secondary Students - \$45.00

Lower Peninsula Elementary Students - \$42.50



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