

Spuraway Gardens

Welcome About History Owner's Access



Spuraway Vision

To ensure our homes maintain their value and provide a comfortable, quiet place to call home through effective management, continuous building and garden improvement, and community development

Welcome to Spuraway Gardens

235 Keith Road, West Vancouver, BC

Spuraway is one of West Vancouver's most beautiful garden estates

This website is operated under the direction of the Spuraway Gardens Strata Council

The information provided on this website is for information purposes only.

Not responsible for any errors or omissions

Website design and maintain by www.reikanishio.com

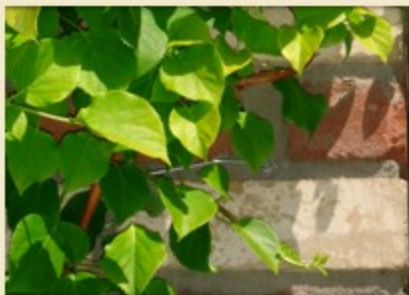


B C C O N D O S . N E T



Spuraway Gardens

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Amenities

- The Outdoor Pool
- Lodge with social venue & guest suite

About Spuraway Gardens

Spuraway's homes range in size and floor plans:

- § studio
- § one bedroom
- § one bedroom + den
- § two bedroom
- § two bedroom + den
- § three bedroom
- § three bedroom + family room

Total: 167 units

- § 45 suites
- § 122 townhouses

Range: 475 to 1775 sq. 

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The amenities include an outdoor swimming pool; the historic 1911 Lodge can be made available for owner's functions and the guest suite for owners' visitor accommodation.

Spuraway is close to hiking trails, the Capilano River, Ambleside Beach, Park Royal Village and shopping mall, and within minutes of local ski mountains.

Spuraway has the West Vancouver community bus service #256 operating from the Lodge to and from Park Royal, Ambleside, and the West Vancouver Seniors Centre.

Spuraway facilitated a *Depreciation Report* under the *Strata Property Act* in 2007 resulting in a thirty-year *Repair & Maintenance Plan* for refurbishments and capital projects. The Plan is updated annually and currently extends to 2040 and includes budget plans and projections.

Over the past several years the following capital improvements have been made:

- ♣Central boiler heating system replaced by a hi-tech decentralized six-boiler system for hot-water heat
- ♣Cedar shingle roof replacement for all townhouses
- ♣Townhouse chimney restorations
- ♣Replacement of all suites domestic water supply pipes (hot and cold)

Planned refurbishments for 2011 include all flat roofs and the elevator is scheduled to be replaced in 2012.

The owners' strata fees include hot-water heating, municipal metered-water charges, hot water, building insurance, residential Operations Manager, site staffing, annual service contractors, strata services by Baywest Management, regular contributions to the Contingency Reserve Fund, and buildings and gardens & grounds improvement.

For information regarding homes for sale check the MLS website: www.mls.ca
Spuraway is found under West Vancouver, Cedardale



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History of Spuraway Gardens

Summary

Circa 1911 Japanese carpenters built a beautiful oriental-style house on Keith Road, just west of the Keith Road Bridge over the Capilano River. The following year the area became part of the newly incorporated District of West Vancouver and in 1917 the new owner named the house Spuraway.

For over fifty years the property was a family home, farm, and equestrian centre.

In 1965 the property was developed into a residential complex which inherited the style of the house – which became the lodge, and retained the swimming pool, gymnasium complex, and the essence of the garden environment. The complex became a strata property in 1978.

The following history has been gathered from various sources. Spuraway is especially grateful to the staff of the West Vancouver Museum & Archives, the North Vancouver Museum & Archives, the West Vancouver Memorial Library, and current Spuraway owners for providing information and photographs.

The Mahon Years



The "log cabin" under construction circa 1911

Photo from the North Var

B C C O N D O S . N E T



On May 4th 1908, Edward Mahon wrote to a friend in England:

"... I have bought the Capilano flume which runs from about a couple of miles north of the dam down to the First Narrows, together with some timber up the Capilano. I have also bought a little mill and am leasing it to some Japanese, who are going to cut timber on their own property up the Capilano and pay me \$2.00 per thousand for the use of the sawmill and the flume..."

Edward Mahon treated the Japanese people fairly and earned their respect. They responded to his kindness in an unexpected way.

Bryan Mahon

"Dad mentioned to his employees that he'd like to have a little log cabin up the Capilano, but he didn't supervise them because he was busy with other affairs. Perhaps out of respect for him they built a house that was much larger than a little cabin. Since they were Japanese they made a roof curled up at the edges in Oriental style. It had quite an individual character. It was much larger than he had in mind. Dad finally sold the log cabin to a Mr. Herrmann. Mr. Herrmann liked horses, so he made a riding ring and that's how it got the name Spuraway."



Painting of the log cabin circa 1911

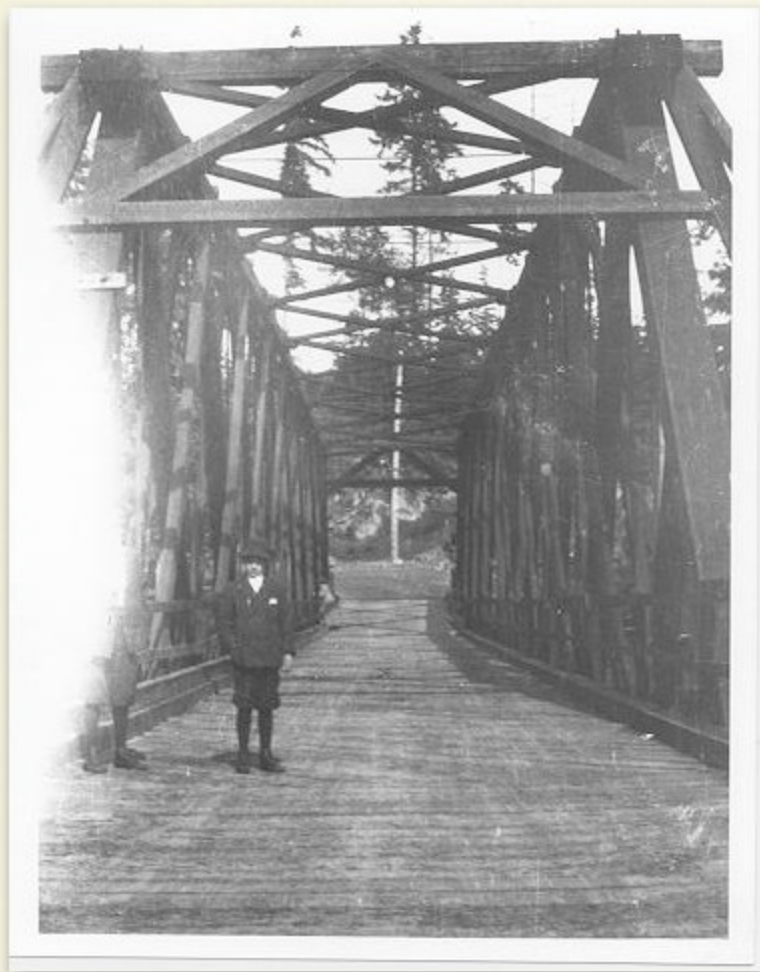
Photo from the North Vancouver Museum & Archives

A Chronicle of West Vancouver 1912-1987

A Place of Excellence

Bruce Ramsay 1987

"In 1919 the Capilano Lumber Company had put into operation their mega project, the sixteen-mile long railway whose shadowy remains can still be seen near Keith Road and the Capilano River." Page 120.



Keith Road Bridge circa 1915

Photo from West Vancouver Museum & Archives

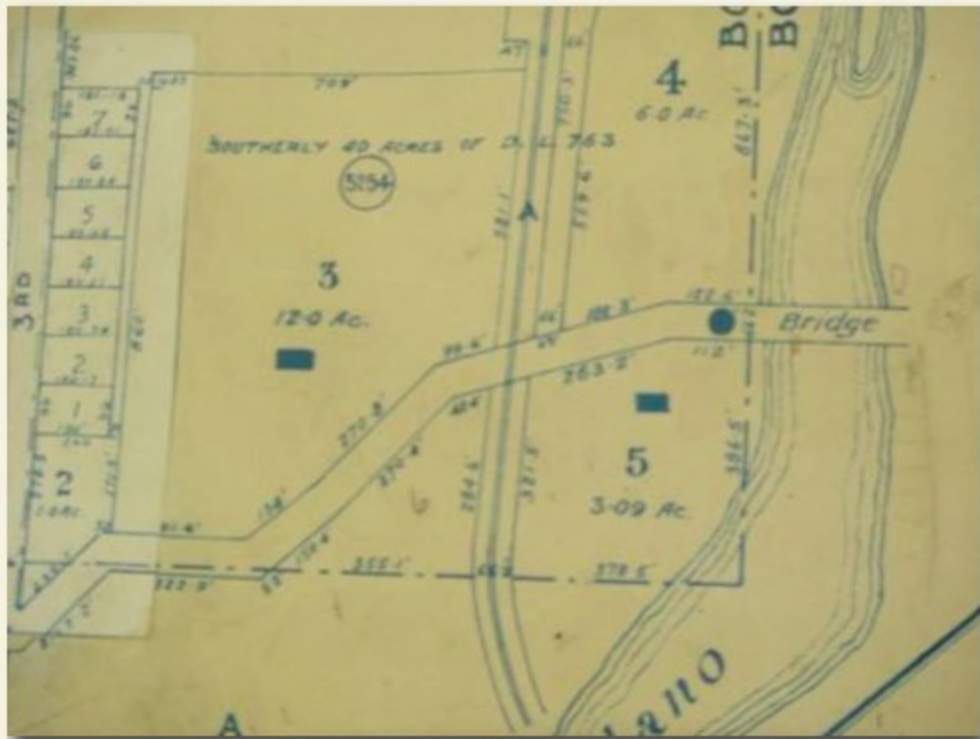


Capilano The Story of a River

James W. Morton 1970

"A railroad. By June 1st 1918, six miles of standard gauge logging railway was in operation from the valley (Capilano) to the North Vancouver waterfront near the old Vancouver Creosoting Company plant at the foot of Pemberton Street." Page 99.

"... the company quietly removed the railroad in 1934..." Page 102.



West Vancouver municipal 1926 map of Keith Road and the Spuraway lot.
Note the Keith Road Bridge and the logging railway running north-south through the property.

From West Vancouver Museum & Archives



The Herrmann Years

George Elliot Herrmann
1886-1987

Mr. George E Herrmann was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on October 31st 1886. As a young man working in Seattle, he visited Vancouver, fell in love with the city, and, in 1912, moved north with his wife, the former Miss Estella Lewis. Their only child, Adele Emmaline, named after both her grandmothers, was born at the Nicola Street Private Hospital the following January. The family lived at various residences in the city before Mr. Herrmann, in 1917, purchased a two-storied log home and tract of property on Keith Road, which, by that time, formed part of the municipality of West Vancouver. He called it Spuraway – a name that had caught from a book he had read.

This house was to remain in his family for the next thirty-five years.

No one could argue about the originality or the structure. In a newspaper article dated April 18th 1911, under the heading *New Departure for Residential Novelty*, the Express ran the following:

"Not far from the termination of the Capilano rail car line and situated on Keith Road, a house unique in the annals of North Vancouver house construction is being erected (By the following year the site would form part of the newly incorporated West Vancouver). To the observant pedestrian wending his way to and from civilization perhaps nothing more remarkable about the structure is noticeable than the quaint pagoda-like dip of the roof projecting far out from the walls in the architectural style peculiar to the Orient and Merry Widow bonnets or the fact of logs being used in place of the conventional building materials. Every bit of woodwork is made of the crude natural wood, free from the degrading touch of unthinking mechanical implements, and shaped with hand saw, plane, and other elbow grease-driven tools in such a manner as to produce an effect at once rustic and refined."

George fell in love with the place and over the years several structural changes were made and extensive development of the property carried out, but the heart of the log house, like its name, remained.

It must be remembered that in those early days Spuraway was a farm, relatively isolated, and removed from any shopping area; self sufficiency was essential and, for that reason, cows and chickens were kept, a vegetable garden cultivated, and an orchard planted.

But it wasn't all functional. Beautiful flower beds were planted, and shrubs, and there was a lily pond and fringing the formal gardens a variety of trees, many of them imported from England by Mr. Ed Mahon.

And of course, there were the horses – among them "Lady Radiant" sired by "Brigham Radiant", and much later on "Silver" who would be ridden by the Herrmanns' grandchildren. The Herrmanns were great horse lovers and hosted many equestrian events on their estate which boasted a stable with four box stalls and one standing stall, an exercise track, and two paddocks that stretched almost to 3rd Street. Mr. Herrmann was a founding director of the Lions gate Riding and Polo Club and Mrs. Herrmann, an avid golfer as well as an expert horsewoman, was a founding member of the Capilano

Until his retirement in 1952, Mr. Herrmann was managing director of the Canadian Creosoting Company located at the foot of Pemberton Avenue in North Vancouver. In that capacity he traveled a good deal on business, particularly in Canada, but also England, South America, and India. He spent an entire year in India at the time when the sun never set on the British Empire. The changes he wrought at Spuraway were considerable.

All the posts that ringed the property were first creosoted making them rot resistant. Mr. Herrmann was extremely safety conscious and would not permit the use of barbed wire or even wire mesh so that neither people nor animals could be injured. Instead, horizontal bars of round pipe were set between the fence posts.

The large addition to the north side of the house was added on by Mr. Herrmann after the demolition of the north wing. With the passage of time, the trellis would be obscured by foliage and the porch-like arbour in the centre, linking the old and new parts of the house, would be shaded in the summer by vines heavy with grapes from which Mrs. Herrmann made jams, jellies, and wine. The colourful tulip beds formed just a small part of the landscaped grounds. The majority of the trees fringing the formal gardens had been imported from England by Mr. Ed Mahon who acquired the property from Mr. Dillon, the original owner. California redwoods from that time still stand today.

To the right of the tulip beds lay a rectangular lily pond. In later years it would be cleaned out for Mr. Herrmann's grandchildren to play in. Today it is the site of Spuraway's swimming pool.

Squash and badminton courts were laid out and a building constructed containing changing rooms, shower facilities, and a kitchen. A small extension was added on to the northern wall of the house to provide a stairway when a furnace was installed, the house having initially been heated by fireplaces. A port cochere was built on the east side of the house. And inside, was the latest of everything. Granddaughter Valerie Vopni can't ever remember there not being a dishwasher, for example. The changes wrought by Mr. Herrmann were tremendous and all the more remarkable when one realizes that it was accomplished on an annual salary of \$16,000.



In 1944, Mr. Herrmann sold Spuraway to his daughter Adele and her husband Mr. Ernie McDermott of McDermott Motors. The McDermotts employed Vancouver architect Mr. Charlie Van Norman to close in the south-facing veranda and convert it into a den. An imposing stone fireplace was built into its eastern wall. The beautiful outdoor porch handrails were retained and can be seen today in what is known as the library of the Lodge. The McDermotts lived at Spuraway until 1952 when the property was sold to Gordon Gibson, Sr.

At the age of one-hundred, George Elliott Herrmann passed peacefully away on Easter Sunday, April 19th 1987 – seventy-six years and a day from the appearance in the Express of the article on his beloved log



Entrance of Spuraway circa 1943
Photo from current Spuraway owner

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What was published then is still true today, "... the skill, art, and conscientious efforts of the Japanese carpenters (for by such is the house being built) have remained unsung, strikes most forcibly the artistic sense of things that are:

In the older days of art,
Builders wrought with greatest care
Each minute and unseen part
For the Gods see everywhere.

Recurr to us as very applicable in the present instance, for the insignificant and infinitesimal details are finished with the same degree of care and skill as the larger and more promiscuous ones. Massive mantles with beautiful and hideous representations strangely contrasted carved upon them, ceilings evenly subdivided by beams of second-growth cedar with no other preparation than that of removing bark, wood carvings along the corniced borders add a tastefully constructed stairway in coloured woods form optional food for the delighted lookers who seem to feel the oriental glamour which is pre-eminent in this creation of a prosaic continent. The carpenters of the new world might well profit from by studying the methods of the artists of the Asian race who have generously enthused their generation-taught knowledge into each latticed window or mortised joint. Some \$12,000 it is said has been expended upon this residence which is owned by Mr. Dillon of North Vancouver, while more must be spent before the completion of the work." (Description from the Express.)

The Keith Road Bridge after its collapse in 1917

Note the roof of Spuraway upper left



Photo from West Vancouver Museum & Archives



Spuraway from the Air 1951

To the right of the building where the gym once stood and where building eight now stands one can see a number of other buildings. Note also the Keith Road bridge and the abandoned rail-bed



Spuraway from the Air 1951
Photo West Vancouver Museum & Archives

Spuraway from the Air - June 1962

The Keith Road Bridge has been removed and the Upper Levels Highway and bridge constructed 1957



Photo West Vancouver Museum & Archives; detail from photograph 65981.

Do you have more information, memories, or material?

We will greatly appreciate any additional information or material relating to the history of Spuraway; please contact www.bcccondos.net

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Council Values

Council will provide outstanding service to the owners by:

- fiscal responsibility
- thorough research and planning
- effective two-way communication and dialogue
- encouraging and facilitating improvement of owners' homes
- thoughtful and evidence-based decision making for the benefit of the owners as a whole

All Council activities and decisions will be characterized by: honesty, compassion, accountability, integrity, and respect



B C C O N D O S . N E T



Contacts & Forms

Emergency

Call Baywest management 604 257 0325

General Messages

Mail to the Lodge mailbox

The Strata Council

Through the Strata Manager Mike Chess
Baywest Management
301-1195 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC V6H 3X5
Phone: 604-257-0325
Direct 604-714-6389
Fax 604-592-6119
_Email : mchess@baywest.ca

The website

Comments regarding the site, corrections, suggestions, and advice are welcome.

Please email webmaster@spurawaygardens.com



Residents resurrect lodge's history

Spuraway Lodge celebrates 100th anniversary

BY ERIN MCPHEE, NORTH SHORE NEWS APRIL 13, 2011



Spuraway Gardens' operations manager Toby Millage (left) and centenary committee member Gary Payne are among those celebrating the landmark West Vancouver lodge's 100th anniversary this month.

Photograph by: Paul McGrath, NEWS photo

A group of West Vancouver residents are reaching out to the wider community in hopes of compiling the full story behind a North Shore landmark approaching its centennial.

Spuraway Gardens, a West Vancouver townhouse complex located at 235 Keith Rd., is also home to a historic log house believed to have been built by Japanese carpenters in 1911. For the following 50 years, the building served a variety of uses -- cabin, home, farm or equestrian centre -- to a number of well-known families including the Mahons, Herrmanns, McDermotts and Gibsons. In 1965, the property around it was developed into townhouses, though the lodge remained intact and now serves as a club and activity ce

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"It's a fascinating piece of West Van history," says centenary committee member Robert Taylor. "There are very few buildings in West Van that are older than this one."

Fascinated by the lodge's history as well as unique architecture, a group of Spuraway Gardens residents formed a centenary committee, with the support of the strata council, and are endeavouring to compile the building's history. They're asking anyone with stories or photographs to contact them. "In planning this, we've made connections with people who really care about history," says centenary committee chairwoman Janet Morningstar, adding they've also learned a lot about the former owners' impact on the development of the North Shore.

Committee members are presenting a series of local history talks for those who currently call Spuraway home, featuring well-known community historians, and are hosting a centennial celebration April 16 for residents, past and present, as well as those who've assisted in putting the lodge's history together. Invitations have been extended to former lodge residents as well. "We're really thankful that this building was not demolished and turned into another condo building, I think because of the intrinsic historical value but also its value as a private club for the residents," says Taylor.

For more information or to read about the lodge's history as compiled thus far, visit www.spurawaygardens.com. To submit a story or photo, email webmaster@spurawaygardens.com.

