

Statement of Significance
Toby House
2055 Queens Avenue
West Vancouver, BC
May 2008

Historic Place

The historic place is the Toby House, a single-family residence with a glass-and-stucco exterior, located at 2055 Queens Avenue in West Vancouver. It was built in 1962 in the West Coast Style. It is located on a large lot in a residential neighbourhood of West Vancouver.

Heritage Value

The main heritage value of the Toby Residence is its place as a pioneer of the West Coast Style and the inclusion of many of the defining elements of that style in both the exterior and interior details. The house has further value for its integrity: the immaculate condition of the house and garden and the retention of the original décor and fittings make it an important example of its type.

Architect Ray L. Toby designed and built the home for his family in 1962. The land was part of what was then a largely undeveloped area on the periphery of central West Vancouver. The Toby family has occupied the home continuously to the present date. The home was started shortly after Toby's firm, Toby Russell Buckwell Architects, won the contract for the design of the new District of West Vancouver's Municipal Hall on 17th Street.

The design epitomizes what is now referred to as the West Coast Style. The roofline and clerestory give the exteriors a light and floating look. The clerestory provides interior, natural light from all directions as the sun moves throughout the day. The open-plan layout allows the activity areas to blend into each other. The dining area is separated from the entrance hall and formal living area by a screen wall, which does not extend to the roof. The openness of the plan is continued in the open tread staircase. The lack of superfluous detailing and reliance on the integrity of the materials are important features of the West Coast style.

The house was integrated into the building site with little alteration to the natural contour and a minimal removal of vegetation. The large floor-to-ceiling windows blur the line between interior and exterior space. The garden has been developed to emphasize the native species and natural topography of the site. Non-native plantings of maples and rhododendrons are limited to the area immediately adjacent to the house. On the west side, the site slopes steeply to a creek that has been kept in its natural course and is surrounded by native

cedars, ferns, mosses and salal. This style of gardening, where non-native species are limited and large portions of the found landscape are retained, is a common and appropriate landscaping for West Coast Style buildings. It reflects the importance of retaining the integrity of the site and the connection to the natural world.

Character-defining Elements

The character-defining elements of the Toby House include:

- Features of the West Coast Style, such as the floor-to-ceiling windows, the clerestory windows, and the open plan
- Characteristics that demonstrate the roots of the West Coast Style in the International Style, evident in features such as the smooth wall surfaces, the windows set flush with the outer wall plane, and the horizontal, asymmetrical massing
- The kitchen area, which has clean-lined, European cabinets arranged in a simple galley style
- The interrelationship between interior and exterior spaces
- The native plants and trees in the garden and on the grounds, particularly on the side away from the street