



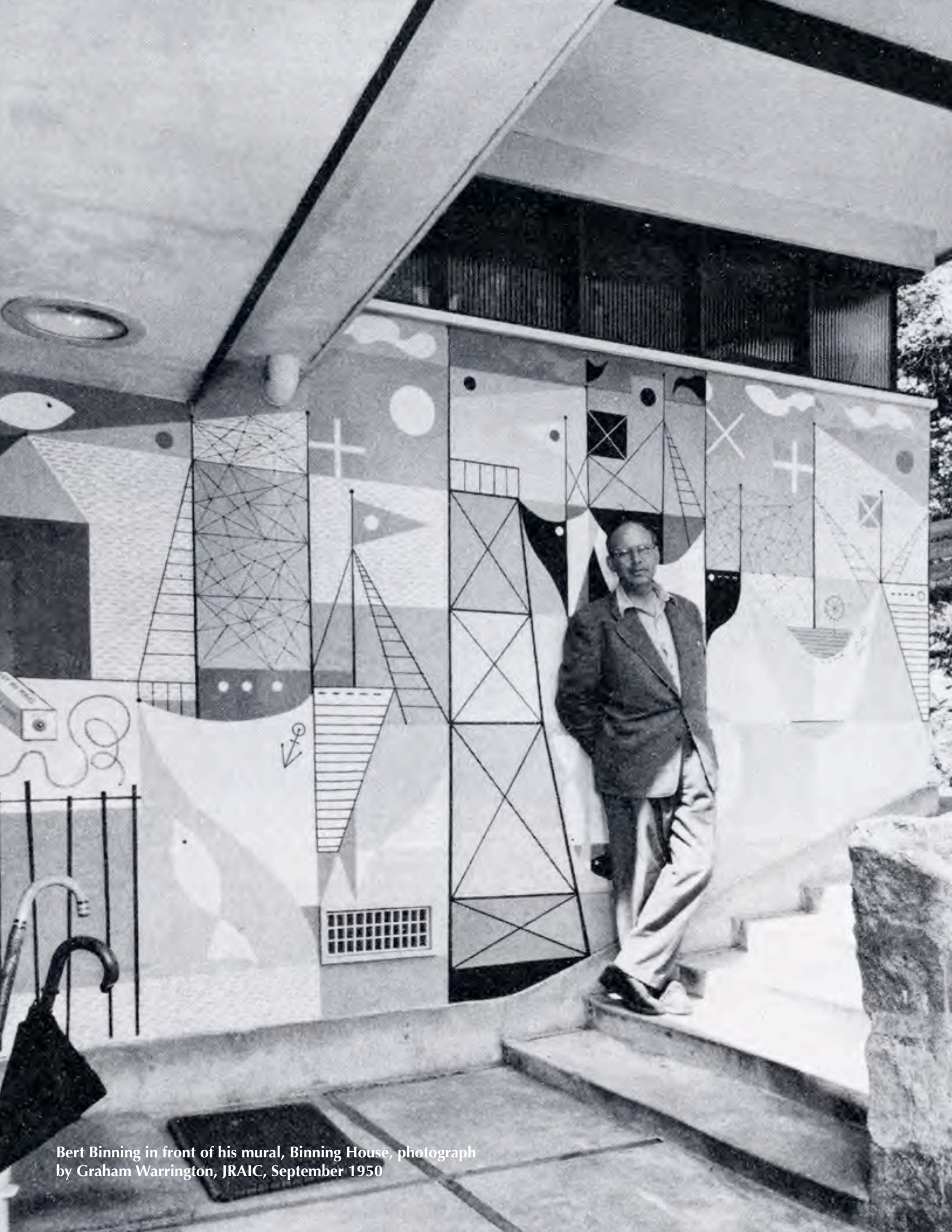
BINNING HOUSE

2968 MATHERS CRESCENT, WEST VANCOUVER

CONSERVATION PLAN

APRIL 2017

DONALD LUXTON
AND ASSOCIATES INC 



Bert Binning in front of his mural, Binning House, photograph by Graham Warrington, JRAIC, September 1950

BINNING HOUSE CONSERVATION PLAN

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Subject Property:	Binning House 2968 Mathers Crescent West Vancouver, British Columbia
Completion Date:	1941
Architect:	Architect: Bertram Charles Binning (consulting architects C.E. Pratt and R.A.D. Berwick)
Original Owners:	Bertram Charles Binning and Jessie Binning
Heritage Status:	National Historic Site of Canada; Interior and Exterior Municipal Heritage Designation, District of West Vancouver.



The Binning House is a one-storey house located on a sloping lot on a mature tree, quiet residential street in the District of West Vancouver. The house is oriented into a steep hilltop overlooking Burrard Inlet and the city of Vancouver. Designed in 1939 by owner and artist Bert Binning, the house is a very early example of the Modern architectural movement in Canada. Binning's progressive views, eclectic mix of training and mentors, and the time he spent in Europe during the 1930s helped him create a residence that is a spectacular mix between art and architecture, among the first of its kind in Canada.

Modern architecture on the west coast of Canada is characterized by specific elements, some of which apply to the Binning House and some of which were rejected by Binning and replaced with unexpected, whimsical alternatives. The Binning House is found on a unique, sloping site in a previously undeveloped area. The integration of the building into this rough, natural environment is a hallmark of the West Coast Modern architectural movement. The house design comprises geometric forms with open-plan layouts, characteristic of Le Corbusian Modernism. The house also features unique trapezoidal shapes in both glass and tile, along with angled furniture and

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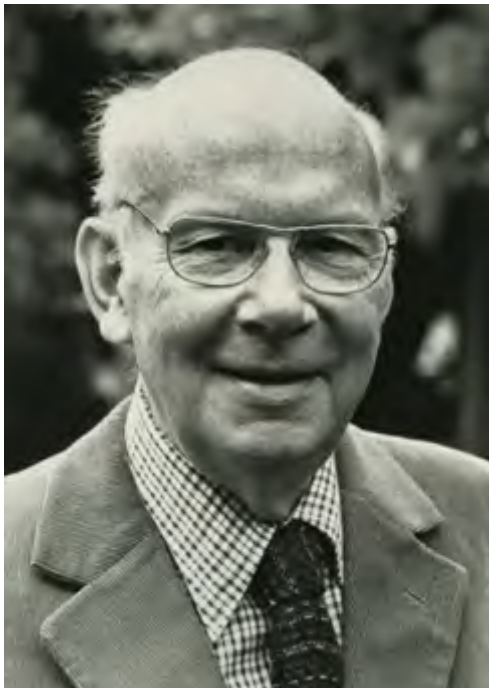
walls. Binning “deviated from the strict tenets of modernist houses in Europe, such as perfect rectangularity and undecorated planar walls. He had the courage to paint a mural not only on an important interior wall of his house, but also a large, colourful one on an exterior wall as a welcoming gesture at the front door” (Rogatnick, Abraham J., Ian M. Thom, and Adele Weder. 2006, page 10).

Natural light was considered one of the key design elements in this new Modern architecture. Floor-to-ceiling windows on the south façade of the house provided ample daylight for the interior, the effect of which is exaggerated when the windows pivot to create doors – transitioning the house to a flowing indoor/outdoor space. The large window/door elements also provide easy access to the outdoor patio, which offers views of Burrard Inlet. The subtle trapezoidal clerestory windows of the study introduce natural light into the house from all sides.

In 1997, the house was designated a National Historic Site. The District of West Vancouver designated the Binning House as a heritage site in 1999. The house was owned by the Binnings until 2007, when Bert’s wife Jessie passed away on May 25th at the age of 101.

The purpose of this Conservation Plan is to provide a comprehensive background of the Binning House site, including its history, heritage value, vision, condition review and necessary conservation interventions. It will outline the general conservation approach that has been determined to be most appropriate for the long-term maintenance and operation of the site. This Conservation Plan will guide the future planning and physical work that is to be executed at the site, to ensure that the heritage value of the Binning House National Historic Site is preserved in perpetuity.

1.1 BERT AND JESSIE BINNING



Born in Medicine Hat, Alberta in 1909, Bertram Charles Binning came to Vancouver with his parents in 1913. The city of Vancouver was still relatively young at the time of Bert’s arrival and, though it had experienced a dramatic housing boom prior to the recession of 1913 and the advent of World War One in 1914, it would have looked much like “the frontier town it had been less than thirty years before when the apparently unpromising site of Gastown had been chosen as the terminus for the railroad” (Rogatnick, Abraham J., Ian M. Thom, and Adele Weder. 2006, page 2) in 1886.

With both his paternal and maternal grandfathers as architects, Binning’s love and appreciation for the art form grew from an early age. Binning began to explore art and drawing when, at the age of sixteen, he was hospitalized for two years due to an illness. His lengthy hospital stay effectively ended his pursuit of architecture as a career, but it did nothing to dull his love of the craft and more than anything, it fostered his incredible artistic

talent as he spent much of his hospital time experimenting with lines and colour. Throughout his career, Binning “maintained that the discipline of architecture, its dependence on a strong sense of

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organization and structure, informed his approach to drawing, painting and mural design” (Rogatnick, Abraham J., Ian M. Thom, and Adele Weder. 2006, page 6). Binning cultivated his artistic career by attending the newly formed Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts (known today as Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design) in 1927, graduating in 1932. Following his graduation, Binning was hired on as part of the school’s staff as an instructor.

Jessie Isabel Wyllie was born in 1906 and was raised in Vancouver’s West End neighbourhood. Jessie’s father, a prosperous businessman, brought her to Japan at age 19, from which she developed a lifelong appreciation for Japanese culture. In 1935, she married Bert Binning at her parent’s cottage in the Gleneagles area of West Vancouver.



After their marriage, Bert continued to teach, until the couple decided to travel abroad to London in order to further Binning’s artistic studies. Indeed, Binning’s year in Europe would prove to be one of the most formative of his life. Bert studied at the Central School of Arts & Crafts with Bernard Meninsky; the Westminster School of Art with Mark Gertler; and, by the end of 1938, at the Ozenfant Academy, with sculptor Henry Moore. It was also during this educational period when Bert and Jessie would visit the many galleries and exhibitions showcasing the Modern artistic and architectural movement – exposing the Binnings to the work of Berthold Lubetkin, Marcel Bruer, Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, and Frank Lloyd Wright, among others. Binning’s “European experience awakened him to the profound experience of art, architecture and life joining in a sublime totality” (Rogatnick, Abraham J., Ian M. Thom, and Adele Weder. 2006, page 6), a perspective which he would maintain throughout the rest of his career and his personal life. It was following this influential year that the Binnings returned home to West Vancouver, via a trip to the World’s Fair in New York. While in New York, the couple also visited the inaugural exhibition at the newly opened building at the Museum of Modern Art. Equipped with all that they had learned, seen and experienced, the Binnings, upon their return, designed their new house, which would act as a catalyst for the Modern movement in Canada, and serve as a teaching model for countless artists and architects alike.

Construction of a house in the hills of West Vancouver would have been a risky venture at the time. The Lions Gate Bridge, which had been very recently constructed in 1938, was described by the Federal government as leading to nowhere. Nonetheless, the Binnings were steadfast in their commitment to their residential project, and to bringing the Modern architectural movement to the west coast of Canada. Binning remarked, “I wanted to build this house to prove to myself that there was a contemporary architecture, and it worked” (Rogatnick, Abraham J., Ian M. Thom, and Adele Weder. 2006, page 9). With assistance and consultation from his local architect friends, including Ned Pratt, who produced and refined the formal blueprints, and R.A.D. Berwick, Binning designed the house into a hilltop on Mathers Crescent in West Vancouver. Through the

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design process, Jessie made suggestions to improve the practicality of the living space, notably changing the orientation of the house plan to place the kitchen on the east side. After the design had been finalized, construction began and Bert and Jessie's house was completed in 1941.

Following the construction of the innovative house, Binning was invited by founder of UBC's School of Architecture, Frederic Lasserre, to join the faculty as an art instructor to architecture students. Binning not only excelled at his job at the University, but he was instrumental in raising the arts to a place of prominence on campus and was one of the founders of the Department of Fine Arts and the Norman MacKenzie Fine Arts Complex:

Binning's campaign to establish a concentrated arts centre on campus was gradually brought to fruition with the erection of an art, architecture and community planning building in 1962, followed by the completion of buildings for theatre and music as well as an anthropology museum nearby. The final unit for the centre, a proper art gallery, which Binning tirelessly campaigned for and dreamed of seeing in his lifetime, was not built on the campus until several years after his passing (Rogatnick, Abraham J., Ian M. Thom, and Adele Weder. 2006, page 39).

During his time at the University, Binning was also commissioned to create several high profile installations for downtown Vancouver buildings, as well as one in the Edmonton International Airport (1963). Among his Vancouver commissions, Binning completed two murals for the O'Brien Advertising Centre (1952), the spectacular interior coloured panels of the B.C. Electric (Dal Grauer) Substation (1952-1953), the CKWX radio station building (1954), the mosaic tiling of the B.C. Electric Building (1956), and the full-wall Imperial Bank of Commerce mural (1958), which can still be viewed in the retail store at 586 Granville Street. Combining his love of art and architecture, the murals allowed Binning to become part of the architectural process, enhancing the physical and emotional experience of viewing a building and bringing quality artwork to the public eye.

Throughout his life, Binning was instrumental in promoting and encouraging the proliferation of art in Vancouver. Though he contributed to the artistic community greatly through his teaching, murals, and architectural projects, he also advanced the arts through his campaigns for international attention on Vancouver:

As the fifties came to a close the isolated character of Vancouver inexorably began to change from that of a decidedly unsophisticated city ... Bert Binning played a major part in the initiation and inspiration of this cultural change, which resulted in the period 1955 to 1970 being referred to as Vancouver's 'Golden Age'. He became a veteran in the campaign to bring Vancouver's culture into the twentieth century, a battle joined by many Vancouver families concerned that their children grow up and learn in a more sophisticated and cultured environment than that which existed when they first settled in the city (Rogatnick, Abraham J., Ian M. Thom, and Adele Weder. 2006, page 30).

With the help of influential Vancouverites such as the Binnings, Frederic Lasserre, Norman Young, and the Koerners, among many others, the Vancouver fine arts community was successful in bringing many visiting arts practitioners to Vancouver for the education and illumination of its public. Several festivals and events were organized annually to further the celebration of the fine arts, including the Vancouver International Festival and the UBC Festivals of the Contemporary Arts.

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Binning was active in the arts community until his early passing in 1976 at the age of 67. Binning's contribution to the artistic and architectural community is manifested by his residence, in which his beloved wife Jessie lived until her passing in 2007 at the age of 101. Jessie, who faithfully cared for and loved the house for sixty-six years, made provisions in her Will for the conservation of the house because she recognized how important it was to the foundations of West Coast Modernism. Bert's legacy is continued through the UBC B.C. Binning Memorial Scholarship, as well as through the many people he mentored throughout his lifetime who would go on to be some of Vancouver's most influential artists, architects, and impresarios. His legacy also lives on, not only through the conservation of the house, but also through his numerous artistic installations throughout Vancouver.

Binning's character, his power to influence, and the romantic basis of his persona modified by his love of classical rationalism affected the lives of his students and those around him. Everyone benefited from his art and the arts programs he had spiritedly and effectively defended and supported with devotion and determination, tempered with much good humour and joy (Rogatnick, Abraham J., Ian M. Thom, and Adele Weder. 2006, page 40).

1.2 BINNING AS ARCHITECT: THE ROOTS OF MODERNISM



The Modern architectural movements, as with most movements, was late to come to the west coast of Canada. Where, beginning as early as the 1910s, the theories and practice of the like of Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, and Walter Gropius had already begun to influence the art and architecture of Europe, the Canadian west coast was still newly settled, caught up in the Edwardian and Craftsman influences transferred over from the British Empire.

Having moved to Vancouver in 1913, Binning would have witnessed the growth of the city from its humble beginnings as a railway terminus and shipping port, through to its realization as a coastal metropolis. His exposure to architecture from an early age, via both of his grandfathers, combined with his early devotion to art, nurtured during a lengthy hospital stay, perhaps encouraged Binning to view the world in a more artistic and liberal way. His talents were furthered by his time as a student, and later as an instructor, at the Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts. This was followed by a one-year stay in London, England and an influential visit to New York, where he was exposed to the contemporary art and architectural visions of the late 1930s. Binning brought back with him the ideas of his overseas mentors and, through the design and construction of his house, created a tangible representation of his own personal interpretation of that progressive thought.

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1.3 BINNING AS ARTIST

“Binning is nothing if not original in the presentation of his ideas. While there is always a feeling of authenticity about his work, he shows fine selective ability, drawing with freedom and fancy, yet never offending the dictates of good taste, or exceeding the confines of verity”

- Mildred Valley Thornton, March 7, 1944

Bert Binning described himself as an artist, first and foremost, though he would go on to become an accomplished designer, educator, and mentor. Remembered and appreciated as one of the first real abstract artists, Binning adhered to the belief that “drawing, drawing and more drawing [was] the basis for all creative art”, a principle he enforced through his own work and through his many years teaching artists and architects alike.

Born into a family of architects, Binning was expected to follow suit, particularly after showing an interest in the discipline so early in his life. However, after suffering through a long illness as a child and after moving to Vancouver in 1913, a city with no established architecture program as of yet, Binning turned to art, enrolling in the Vancouver School of Art in 1927. After graduating in 1932, Binning was asked to return to the school in the roll of professor, a position he kept until 1949 when he joined the University of British Columbia as an associate professor in the School of Architecture. In 1944, Binning became the first artist to hold a one-man show at the Vancouver Art Gallery, an exhibit that was met with critical acclaim and that filled the Art Gallery spaces with line drawings in pencil and ink. Binning is considered primarily as a figurative artist, as he grounded his work in the everyday sights and sounds of his community, often creating detailed line drawings and portraits or painting images of the ocean, boats, and port activity. Binning was constantly learning and advancing his talent and, during his time as a professor and a working artist, was also traveling to Europe and New York to further his education and study under some of the great modern artists of the time, he was also working to design what would become a groundbreaking house in West Vancouver.

One of Binning’s greatest achievements came in 1955 when he, along with Frederic Lasserre, created the department of fine arts at the University of British Columbia. The two visionary men also collaborated on the Norman Mackenzie Centre for the Arts, which eventually included the Lasserre Building, which contains the School of Architecture, the Music Building, the Frederic Wood Theatre, and the UBC Fine Art Gallery.

Binning combined his love of architecture with his artistic genius in the design of his West Vancouver house, incorporating abstract painting and shape into the design and structure of the building itself. Binning also left his artistic mark on two downtown Vancouver structures, linking art and architecture through his vibrant mosaic tile work on the exterior of the 1956 B.C. Electric Building, as well as through a large mosaic tile mural featuring British Columbia’s major industries at the 1957-58 Imperial Bank of Commerce building, located at 586 Granville Street. Binning’s other large-scale commissions include the 1952 painted mural in the O'Brien Advertising Centre, Vancouver; the 1952-53 interior architectural composition of the B.C. Electric Dal Grauer Substation, Vancouver; and the 1963 colour design of Port Mann Bridge over the Fraser River.

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Binning was honoured in 1971 with the Order of Canada and in 1974 with an honorary doctorate in literature from the University of British Columbia. He passed away in 1976 at the age of 67. He is remembered as one of the great artistic visionaries of the West Coast post-war era.



Imperial Bank of Commerce Mosaic (1957-58), 586 Granville Street, Vancouver



Left: *A Summer Seascape for Christmas Time* (1951); Centre: *Lucy on Chair* (1944) Right: *Ships and Tower* (1948)

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B.C. Electric Building Mosaic (1956), Vancouver

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2.0 HERITAGE VALUE

2.1 PARKS CANADA STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: BINNING RESIDENCE

Description of Historic Place

Binning Residence National Historic Site of Canada is located on a small, steeply sloped site on a well-treed and quiet residential street in West Vancouver, British Columbia, with a view of Burrard Inlet. A small two-bedroom house, it consists of two rectangular volumes that are stepped down to take advantage of the natural topography of the site. With its low massing and flat roof and situation within mature vegetation, the residence virtually disappears into the landscape. The official recognition refers to the house and its lot at the time of designation.

Heritage Value

Binning Residence was designated a national historic site of Canada in 1997 because:

- it is an early and remarkably intact illustration of architecture in the Modern Era;
- it is clearly associated with the changing social, economic, and political conditions of the day;
- it demonstrates meaningful interrelationships between form and function, and architecture and art;
- its design has had a lasting and important impact on the work of artists, architects, and other Canadians across the country.

The Binning Residence constitutes a very early illustration of the Modern movement in residential architecture in Canada. Intended to provide a model for residential design, it combines a Modern approach to form and function with an economy and efficiency of construction by using local materials and up-to-date building technologies. Features such as its post-and-beam construction, simple rectangular volumes with flat roofs and deep overhangs, large windows and open interior plan, set a pattern of design that would influence post-war residential architecture throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Designed and constructed during the war when construction materials and labour were difficult to secure for private homes, the Binning Residence utilized traditional and local materials to produce a house type that could be mass produced and was affordable for the average family. The design is also noted for the careful integration of architecture and landscape. The building's stepped plan follows the slope of the land and the use of large windows, wide terraces and overhanging trellises have the effect of extending the architecture out into the landscape and breaking down the barriers between interior and exterior space.

Bertram Charles Binning (1909-1976), an artist and a leading promoter of Modernist ideology, deemed architecture to be the harmonious expression of science and society. He designed the house in collaboration with consulting architects C.E. Pratt and R.A.D. Berwick, to express the union of abstract art and new architectural forms. To that end, he included a gallery in the house to accommodate a changing selection of his paintings, ensuring that his domestic environment evolved with his art. Believing that the aesthetic criteria of harmony, integrity, order and balance applied to art and architecture alike, Binning worked as an artist and a teacher, promoting good architectural design in contemporary urban life.

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Although the landscape has evolved, the original artwork has been replaced by later Binning pieces, and minor modifications and repairs to the house have occurred, the original design intent has not been compromised.

Character-Defining Elements

Key elements that contribute to the heritage character of the Binning Residence include:

- its location on quiet residential street in West Vancouver, British Columbia;
- its setting on a steeply sloped site;
- its orientation to views across the Burrard Inlet to the University of British Columbia's endowment lands, as well as to views from the house to the mature garden and a series of garden terraces adjacent to the studio and master bedroom;
- its rectangular form, small scale and low massing;
- the flat roof with deep overhangs;
- the post-and-beam construction on a reinforced concrete foundation;
- the open plan concept with efficient space planning;
- the use of hard and soft wood millwork and floors, and cedar v-joint vertical board cladding on both the interior and exterior walls;
- the original fenestration pattern with south facing clerestory windows, continuous floor to ceiling doors, tinted glass in the studio, tinted rolled ribbed glass set in the upper portion of the partition between the living-dining area and the long gallery-entrance hallway;
- the upper terrace extending from the living room square and terraces on the south, east, and north sides;
- the overhanging wooden shade screen;
- the Binning mural on the exterior wall that defines the principle entrance;
- the cantilevered canopy over the front door;
- the generously proportioned living-dining area dominated by a Cypress Creek fieldstone fireplace wall;
- the kitchen with U-shaped layout of custom-made fir plywood cabinets fitted with standard chrome handles and modern appliances;
- the period furniture, fixtures and art collection;
- the landscape elements including a Japanese maple, mature rhododendrons and a grapevine planted by the Binnings, nurtured within a terraced, well vegetated site that takes advantage of its southern exposure slope.

2.2 DISTRICT OF WEST VANCOUVER STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: B.C. BINNING HOUSE

Description of Historic Place

The historic place is the B.C. Binning House, the studio house and property at 2968 Mathers Crescent in West Vancouver that was designed by the artist and teacher Bertram Charles Binning for himself and his wife Jessie in 1941. Later changes include an addition to the house, and a detached garage with workshop below.

Heritage Value

The B.C. Binning House is significant because of its pioneering role as a demonstration site for principles of Modernism in architecture, and its contribution to the development of the West Coast

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Style. It is associated with B.C. Binning, who was an artist, cultural leader and founding director of the Department of Fine Arts at the University of British Columbia. Binning is recognized as a pivotal figure in the Modern movement in British Columbia.

Binning designed his modest bungalow with the help of local architects C.E. Pratt and R.A.D. Berwick in the spirit of the Modern International Style, which he was exposed to while studying in America and abroad. Key design concepts include: an economy of structure, the functional composition of internal and external volumes, an open flexible plan, and the interrelation of internal and external space. The design of this house represents a clear break from the traditional housing typology of the region, and inspired what has come to be known as the West Coast Style.

The house introduced a new relationship between architecture and nature, addressing the view of the surrounding land and seascape rather than the street. Sited half way down the sloping narrow lot, the flat roofline is barely visible from Mathers Crescent, while the house opens up to the view to the south. Binning advocated for the use of local materials that were affordable and readily available, and relied on their integrity to provide a simple design aesthetic. Binning's materiality and his use of built-in furniture and wall murals to compose space reflect the collaboration between art and architecture that would inform his later work on Vancouver's Dal Grauer Substation (1953) and the B.C. Electric Building (1956).

The Binnings used their home as a salon and showcase for Modernism, hosting soirees for progressive local architects and artists, among them Arthur Erickson and Ron Thom, who would be inspired to use architecture to heighten a sense of regional identity. Considered Canada's first truly modern residence, the integrity of the house and its contents continues to be valued for its contribution to education, innovation and discourse.

Affectionately referred to as "The House", it has garnered social value as an icon in Canadian History, and a pilgrimage site for both heritage and design communities.

Character-Defining Elements

- Features of West Coast Modernism including: post and beam construction, extensive glazing, use of affordable local materials, connection between interior and exterior spaces
- Siting of the house back from the road, midway down the sloping narrow lot
- Landscape character and terraced pathway from Mathers Crescent
- Open concept floor plan and use of oblique and acute angles to direct circulation and frame views
- Clear division of space between living, entertaining, and studio areas
- Exterior and interior painted wall murals
- Cedar cladding with v-joints used both in the interior and on the exterior
- Fireplace faced with large, rounded local stones
- Douglas fir plywood cabinetry and built-in furniture
- Clerestory windows of corrugated polycarbonate glass
- South-facing large glass doors opening directly to the outdoor patio and lawn
- Framed view through the trees across Burrard Inlet to the UBC campus

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3.0 VISION

The appropriate level of conservation for the Binning House has been determined through a systematic review of interlocking factors. The lot, which is relatively small compared to those nearby, is delicate and presents extraordinary constraints, but also rewarding opportunities. At first glance, conservation issues seem straightforward, but they are actually quite complex, and the best treatment of the house and site will require a careful, balanced and nuanced approach that takes into account a number of potentially conflicting factors. Through the course of discussions with the current owner, and previous consultation and workshops with community stakeholders, the following factors regarding the conservation of the Binning House were outlined:

Conservation Requirements

From its completion until 2007, the Binning House had only ever been inhabited by its two owners, Bert and Jessie Binning. The house, as originally constructed, was the first full flowering of West Coast Modernism, and as such its 1941 physical fabric is extremely significant. However, the evolution of the house over time was tied to Bert's changing perception of the house, and reflects his experimental approach to design. After Bert's death, changes that Jessie made to the house reflected more of her character. Given the long-term occupation of the house by its creators and driving forces, it would be inconsistent with good conservation practice, specifically Standards 2 and 3 in the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation Historic Places in Canada*, to restore the house solely to its 1941 appearance.

Standard 2: *Conserve changes to a historic place, which over time, have become character-defining elements in their own right.*

Standard 3: *Conserve heritage value by adopting an approach calling for minimal intervention.*

Therefore a balance needs to be struck between the outright preservation of the Binning House and the selective restoration of key elements that would reflect and strengthen its earlier appearances. This can be accomplished through a very careful program of restoration of key features, which can be phased over time.

The value of the Binning House lies not just in its physical fabric, but also in what it represents through the occupation of the house by the Binnings and their connection to the development of the local arts and architecture communities. The story of the Binning House is a broad expression of the design movement of the times; the people involved in the development of West Coast Modernism; and the historical context of British Columbia at a key point in its evolution. This story unfolded over time, and paralleled the Binnings' occupation of the house. Therefore, it is essential that the house not be restored to a restrictive 1941 target date, as that does not tell the whole story of its evolution. A careful balance needs to be struck between the house as it was originally conceived and the house as it currently exists.

The proposed conservation of the Binning House must recognize and balance these requirements with an approach that achieves the highest standards of integrity. The proposed Vision sets forth guiding principles for the conservation work that will take place at the site.

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3.1 VISION FOR CONSERVATION

The Binning House presents a unique opportunity to preserve the history of pioneering modernists Bert and Jessie Binning, as well as the inception of West Coast Modern design. Through careful investigation, it has been determined that some of the building's features should be preserved and/or restored to their original state upon the completion of the house in 1941. This provides an accurate representation of its pioneering West Coast Modern design and will provide insight into the original vision, which was executed by Bert, with the assistance of Jessie, as well as Ned Pratt and R.A.D. Berwick.

The evolution of the house through its occupation by the Binnings will also be respected, via the preservation of certain key features that highlight changes made to the house over the first seven decades. These later changes will be expressed through the selective representation of Bert's changes to the house over time, as well as Jessie's interventions through her seventy-five year residency. The preservation, rehabilitation and restoration proposed for the Binning House will honour both Bert and Jessie, while also celebrating the house as an early and influential example of West Coast Modernism.

3.2 CONSERVATION AND SITE DEVELOPMENT

The general conservation approach is to preserve the Binning House in situ. Through a Heritage Revitalization Agreement, a new residence will be built on the lower, rear portion of the lot; the 1966 garage will also be replaced with a larger structure, a three-car garage with a caretaker's suite at the lower level. The new structures on the site are considered essential to allow the conservation of the Binning House itself.

All work on the site should follow Parks Canada *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* (2010). The house is eligible for B.C. Building Code equivalencies for heritage buildings. Building code issues should be documented as conservation interventions are planned and executed, so that they may be resolved in consultation with the District of West Vancouver's Building Department. Based on the *Standards and Guidelines*, the following levels of intervention are anticipated. These interventions will be phased in, over time, as resources allow and as more intensive investigation is undertaken:

Preservation: Ensure that the fabric of the Binning House is protected from deterioration and that all necessary measures are undertaken to prolong the life of character-defining elements.

Rehabilitation: Ensure that any aspects of the Binning House that are required to support the ongoing use of the building are repaired and upgraded, as required. This includes wiring, lighting, plumbing, etc.

Restoration: Ensure that any missing or deteriorated elements that contribute to heritage value are restored, as required. This includes the removal of later paint layers (when appropriate), the restoration of murals and the recovery of other features that contribute to an understanding of the original house and its evolution.

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4.0 CONDITION REVIEW

4.1 GENERAL

The design of the 1941 Binning House aims to gain the most light and spectacular views while incorporating open spatial configurations, contemporary shapes, artistic colour schemes and simple surfaces clad with local materials. It creates an interesting interrelationship between art and architecture and citing Adele Weder “a three-dimensional montage in architecture” (cited in *Reconsidering the Binning House*, Adele Weder, 2005, page 3). Binning himself explained his architectural design approach:

The architect builds with a great variety of materials, many of which have a wide range of colour, texture and pattern. The choice of which material to use is not always dependent on structural or functional reasons but often concerned with the aesthetic requirements of the building.

B.C. Binning, "Colour in Architecture," *Canadian Art*, 11.4, 1954, 141 (cited in *Reconsidering the Binning House*, Adele Weder, 2005)

The following chapter investigates the existing condition of the house based on site visits in August and October 2011; and further site visits in 2016 and 2017.

It is divided by building materials that were chosen for their regional availability reducing the construction costs of the house. The report lists recommendations for future conservation work based on Parks Canada’s *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*.

4.2 SITE



The Binning House is located in the Altamont neighbourhood of West Vancouver, a quiet, residential district on the northern slopes of the North Shore Mountains with expansive views over Burrard Inlet. Built near the top of a narrow lot, one of the smallest in the area, the design utilizes the natural topography with a steep south sloping hill. Access to the main north-facing entrance is

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available only from the street by a wide concrete stairway leading from the street along the upper garden to the north terrace.

The single storey house steps down once and nestles in the hilly environment. The once magnificent vistas over the ocean are now framed with mature conifers. Notable landscape features include a Japanese maple, mature rhododendrons and a grapevine planted by Binning on or near the upper terrace taking advantage of the southern sun exposure and slope. In addition, existing and newly planted vegetation by the Binnings provided privacy from the street above and surrounding neighbours. The southern terrace has a manicured garden and lawn near the house while the lower portion of the steep lot is presently left in a more natural state.

The 1997 designation as a National Historic Site comprises the historic structure (Binning House) and the lot.

4.3 FORM, SCALE, MASSING



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The Binning House consists of two stepped, almost rectangular volumes with low massing covered with flat roofs that follow the sloping lot. Combining these elements with post-and-beam construction allowed the design of an open plan and split levels with different ceiling heights to suit the hilly site and orienting it towards the south sloping hill. Large south-facing windows, wide terraces and wooden trellises create a perceived extension of the interior space to the exterior and transition between the inside and outside.

The magnificent vistas and surrounding vegetation viewed from the interior space and open terraces, and the play with direct and indirect light through clear and opaque windows and clerestories and their moving shadows on the walls and floors create a vivid experience of the at first sight simple volumes. This dynamic composition and open spatial configuration of the volumes are important design features of the house. Binning also incorporated several trapezoidal architectural elements into his design of the clerestory windows and concrete blocks pavement.

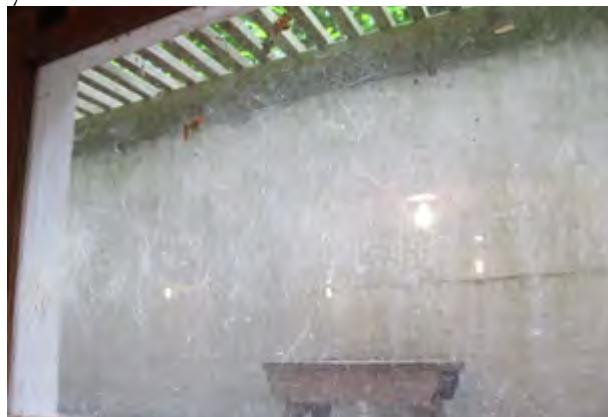
The form, scale and massing remained intact except for few alterations. They include the 1989 addition of a bathroom on the west elevation and a later shed attached to the bathroom. Jessie also commissioned the installation of three fixed skylights. In 1966, a detached two-storey structure containing a garage on the upper level and a potting shed at the lower level was built adjacent to the street.

4.4 MASONRY

4.4.1 Concrete Foundation



foundation, front entryway



foundation, as seen from basement

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The house has a full height basement under the southern volume and a half basement under the northern volume. Accessed via an enclosed wooden stairway from the kitchen, such a basement level was rarely built in modern West Coast homes, as the overall approach was to minimize disturbance of the existing site and ground. Presumably due to the extreme slope of the subject lot the construction of reinforced concrete retention walls was necessary and allowed the provision of full and partial basement levels. Interestingly the reportedly 8" concrete walls required additional stabilization with concrete buttresses on all sides. Basement light wells exist on the east and west sides of the house. The western light well however was overbuilt with the later 1989 addition.

The concrete slab and walls are generally in good condition except efflorescence, a sign of rising water, is notable at the foot of the basement walls. Some moisture ingress from above is evident on the eastern basement wall and may be caused by the light well or a leaking kitchen sink, which should be verified. Settling of the west portion of the house was noted and the condition is currently being monitored over a one year period. Upon completion of the monitoring program, necessary repairs will be made.

4.4.2 Concrete Pavement Pattern



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Concrete pavement pattern photos on page 22, left to right: Row 1 – archival image of front entryway pavement and 2011 image of the front entryway pavement; Row 2 – archival image of the east façade pavement and 2011 image of the east façade pavement; Row 3 – archival image of the rear patio pavement and 2011 image of the rear patio pavement.

Binning's design incorporated a trapezoidal leitmotif in several architectural elements. Among them is the concrete paving pattern, featuring parallelogram shapes. This form is presumably derived from an early design scheme of the house (Ground Floor Plan, Sheet 2, 10 March 1941) that included a canted east wall a canted interior masonry wall providing the specific angle for the parallelogram pavement pattern. A later revision of the architectural design and subsequent construction of the house continued the leitmotif of canted walls in an altered version though it incorporated the initial design intent to execute this pattern in the living room as well as south terrace and thus creating an interrelationship between the exterior and interior.

An archival photo of 1945¹ shows the original location of the parallelogram pattern on the south side of the house. One row of the pattern was installed in the living room in front of the masonry wall and south-facing fenestration. The pattern continued outside with three rows over the full length of the exterior patio in front of the master bedroom and living room and terminated in line with the wide roof overhang. The pattern further continued in front of the projecting kitchen and around the eastern and northern terrace near the main entry door.

Presumably due to the premature deterioration of the concrete, made of very fine aggregate with a smooth surface, the exterior pattern was later replaced. An additional factor might have been insufficient skid resistance of the concrete, an important performance aspect of exterior pavements on the west coast. The only surviving parallelogram pattern exists in the living room.

The larger replacement panels are made of exposed aggregate concrete with a rough surface and do not follow the layout of the original parallelogram pattern.

4.4.3 Concrete Chimney Cap

¹ PA-132040 Library and Archives Canada, Jack Long, National Film Board of Canada (from Rogatnick, Abraham J. et al, p. 13.)

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A large rectangular concrete chimney cap made of reinforced exposed aggregate concrete on all sides shows signs of cracking. This is caused by corrosion jacking of exposed steel bars on the underside and subsequent weakening of the load-bearing capacity of the concrete cap. A repair will be necessary.

4.4.4 Stonework



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Roughly finished stone blocks, commonly termed “rock face” finishing style, were used in several locations of the house. First on the exterior south wall of the master bedroom, which continues on the inside as the floor to ceiling wall with the open fireplace. Further the rising chimney above the roofline was constructed with these stone blocks.

The fieldstone walls are generally in good condition including their mortar joints. An exception is the exterior rock wall below the master bedroom window. This shows significant cracking due to sagging of the southwest portion of the house constructed presumably on loose fill. The cracking is also evident on the interior side and requires monitoring of the condition and recording of future movement of the wall. Pending of the findings stabilization measures will have to be evaluated.

Additional damage is visible on the interior fieldstone wall in the living room with signs of moisture ingress from above. This is evident in surface staining and accumulated efflorescence on the rock and mortar joints of the northern portion of the wall below the chimney stack. The rear side of the stone chimney, located in the master bedroom, is finished with wood panels and the condition of the masonry could not be reviewed. It can be assumed that water damage to this side is also prevalent. This is likely due to the faulty flashing of the chimney above the roofline described below, which requires immediate remediation.

The rectangular shaped chimney built with fieldstones rises above the lower roof and ties with a second, smaller volume into the upper wall and roof. The concrete cap covering the chimney was mentioned above. It appears that the stacks were recently repointed and the masonry work is in good condition except for some environmental dirt and staining, which is a natural occurrence of such an exposed element. The existing metal flashing was recently installed but is failing. Further damage was evident at the connection between the chimney and the upper clerestory windows,

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which is lacking adequate flashing or other means of protection. Water is freely penetrating into an existing cavity causing significant rot of adjacent wood elements and traversing down to the fieldstone wall in the main floor.

Additional landscape elements built with fieldstone exist throughout the garden and mostly consist of retaining walls to stabilize the slopes. The stone walls are in fair to good condition with accumulated organic growth, settling and cracking, and deteriorated mortar in localized areas.

4.5 WOOD

4.5.1 Post-and-Beam Structure



The main structural system of the Binning House is built in post-and-beam above the concrete foundation walls. The post-and-beam structure is clad in most locations and the condition of the wood could not be reviewed.

Notable is insect infestation in some locations, which indicates materials conditions should be further investigated. Carpenter ants, which reside both outdoors and indoors in moist, decaying or hollow wood, cut into the wood grain to provide passageways for movement from section to section of the nest. At the Binning House carpenter ants are visible on the exterior northwest corner of the house, where they access the closed soffit through continuous vents. Interior wood damage and sawdust-like material called frass that ants discard as they tunnel through the wood, are evident on the northwest side of the living room ceiling near the chimney. The discarded frass may be a hint to their nesting location. As outlined above localized damage to the exterior portion of the chimney exists above the frass due to failing flashing. Immediate measures have to be carried out to eliminate the infestation and remediation of the flashing.

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4.5.2 Wood Cladding & Woodwork



On the exterior walls vertical cedar V-joint panelling exists on all four elevations and was also used on interior feature walls including the hallway. The originally varnished cedar cladding was reportedly early painted off-white presumably due to undesired colour changes due to weathering.² There will need to be an investigation to determine the most sensitive paint-removal approach. The vertical V-joint paneling is protected by large roof overhangs and generally in good to very good condition.

Additional wood cladding exists at the corner locations. The northeast corner boards are exposed to back splashing water from the concrete pavement and show significant water damage, splicing and rot at the bottom. In general exterior wood elements including paneling, corner and baseboards close to the ground or near overhanging trees accumulated dirt and organic growth.

The soffits of the cantilevered roofs are finished with painted wood cladding, which is in good condition.

² Bronson, Susan D. p. 8

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4.5.3 Interior Wood Elements



The vertical cedar V-joint panelling is repeated in interior hallway, a feature wall of the Binning House using locally manufactured and hence affordable material. Originally varnished, the panelling is now painted white. There will need to be an investigation to determine the most sensitive paint-removal approach.

Hardwood flooring exists in the living room and hallway and more economical fir floors in the bedrooms and studio. Fir floors in the kitchen and bathroom are now covered with linoleum. The studio area with Binning's easel is also covered with linoleum. The interior plastered ceilings and walls, wood trim, and wood frames of windows and doors are generally painted off-white.

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4.5.4 Windows & Doors



The Binning House incorporates daylight and views as central design features of the architectural design and the window and doorframes are made of local cedar. A continuous floor-to-ceiling window-door assembly on the south elevation opens the living room to the lower garden terrace with vast vistas over the inlet. The simple window and doorframes with clear, single panes are in good condition.

The adjacent south-facing master bedroom receives daylight through a horizontal band of windows terminated at the western end with a single door leading to the lower terrace. The

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subsidence of the west portion of the house has caused racking and detachment of window and door frames from the masonry wall. The windows do not open freely and the misalignment of the assembly is causing drafts and thermal discomfort. It is recommended that the setting should be monitored and the window-door assembly carefully restored.

A set of three wood-sash windows provides daylight to the kitchen from the east side. They consist of two casement windows with internal metal screens on either side of a fixed pane and are in good condition. Below at the basement level a wood-sash awning window provides some daylight through the light well on the east side. The wood window frame of the western basement wall is in covered with tarp.

The large north-facing window band in the studio is interrupted by vertical posts as part of the post-and-beam structure. A single wood door with two glass elements and located adjacent to the window band provides access from the studio to the upper terrace. Special features of the Binning House are clerestory windows with clear glass providing daylight to the hallway and bathroom from the south side. Additional custom-designed clerestories with clear ribbed glass are installed in the north and east walls of the studio. Interestingly they taper on the east wall from 18 inches at the south end to 24.5 inches at the north end the hence repeat Binnings' trapezoidal design leitmotif.

The addition on the west elevation consists of paired aluminum frame windows and a simple door with an external screen door. The east elevation features an original wood door with a clear glass window in the upper portion from the kitchen to the concrete pathway. The main entrance door on the north side is still extant and features a doorknob that is shown in early archival photos of the house. In later years a screen door was added.

Interior window frames with ribbed glass in the upper portion of the partition wall separate the living room from the hallway.

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4.5.5 Trellis



The original large wood trellis appended to the east portion of the south façade is shown in several archival photos from the 1940s. It was later replaced by a shallow trellis, which extends the full-length of the south façade; this second trellis is extant. Both trellises were designed to extend the living room space to the outside. The existing wood trellis is overgrown with vegetation and tied with failing tension rods to the chimney and upper roof. The insufficient fastening of the trellis and its poor condition requires remediation.

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4.6 ROOF



The original tar & gravel roof consists of two planes with slight slopes, large overhangs, and a cantilevered canopy above the front door. Three additional skylights were commissioned, presumably by Jessie, to provide more daylight in the kitchen, bathroom, and later addition. Later roof repairs included the installation of a torch-down roofing material, new aluminum flashings around the chimney and the roof perimeter. The original drainage system appears to remain in place.

Considering that the Binning House is one of the earliest flat-roofed houses on the west coast, inherent design flaws contribute to the present condition of the structure. They include:

- The location of the downspouts from the upper plane is too close to the exterior wall and clerestory windows respectively.
- The slope of the lower plane towards the clerestory windows between the two planes and not away to the south side.
- The free drainage of storm water from the upper roof to the lower plane and lack of rainwater leaders connecting the upper downspouts with the downspouts of the lower roof.
- The rainwater leader above the front entrance is internally routed and seemingly leaking causing damage to the painted mural at the main entrance.

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- The lack of maintenance and clogging of guards with organic debris.
- The drainage of storm water away from the house is presumably defunct due to earlier landscaping work and the condition and routing has to be investigated.

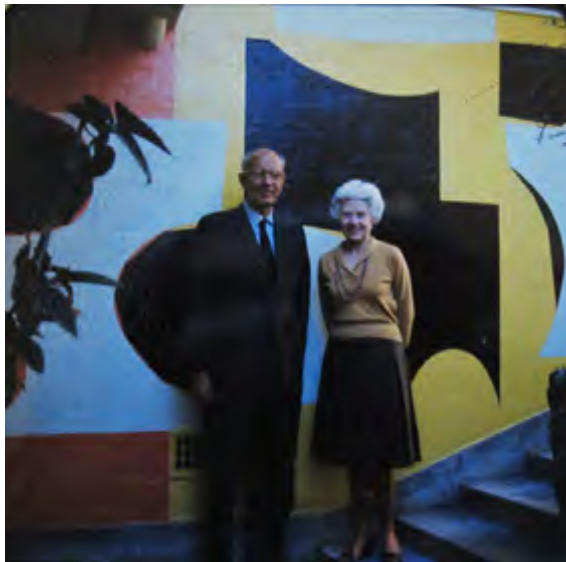
4.7 MURAL



First mural, 1940s



Second mural



Third mural, 1960s



Fourth mural prior to the restoration by Gordon Smith

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Fourth mural following the restoration by Gordon Smith



Mural in 2011



Mural condition, 2011



Mural condition, 2011

The only exterior plaster exists on the northeast corner wall leading to the main entrance. The plaster is applied on top of a masonry wall, which has displayed a total of four decorative murals painted by Binning between the 1940s and late 1960s or early 1970s. The last of Binnings' murals, depicting a geometric figure with bright off-white and yellow colours, was recently repainted by a local artist, Gordon Smith.

The paint and underlying plaster are in some locations deteriorated and cracking. Peeling of paint and plaster and missing batches are also evident and are signs of moisture damage presumably from a failing drainage system. In addition, it should be determined if the paint system used for the decorative mural is suitable for the substrate and exterior application.

There should be a discussion regarding which of the four murals should be restored. Another option would be to create a display screen for each mural, which could be alternated depending on the event.

An interior mural painted by Binning at the end of the hallway is generally in good condition except for cracks in the wall structure due to the moving of this portion of the house.

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4.8 ADDITION



In 1989, a bathroom that today also accommodates a laundry room was added to the guest bedroom on the west side of the Binning House.

4.9 SERVICES

The kitchen and bathroom have been updated since the construction of the house in 1941. An outside water tap burst open in 2010, causing some water staining on the basement wall. The electrical services were not upgraded since their installation and would require a condition review by a professional.

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4.10 GARAGE



In 1966, the early carport near the street was replaced with a structure built into the sloping hill. The upper level is a post-and-beam structure and used as a car garage with a newer roller shutter and clad with vertical wood siding on all elevations. A large overhang with wood soffit exists above the garage door.

The upper level is cantilevered on the south side and supported with timber posts. This allowed the design of a recessed south wall on the lower level housing a potting shed. Two large windows above a rock-clad wall provide daylight and are located adjacent to the wood door. The lower walls are built with concrete blocks and the dirt floor is covered with pebbles. The flat, torch-on roof is slightly north sloping and the visual review indicates accumulation of organic debris on the roof and clogging of the guard.

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5.0 PROPOSED CONSERVATION WORK

5.1 PROPOSED CONSERVATION WORK

Conservation interventions that should take place at the Binning House are listed below. The interventions have been ordered according to the timeframe in which they should take place, with the most urgent needs being listed in earlier stages.

5.1.1 Immediate Actions

- Relocate drainage system including new perimeter drains with RWL and splash pads, move internally routed drain near front entrance
- Install new back slope at lower roof near clerestory windows
- Repair flashings around chimney
- Prune trees adjacent to the house to prevent clogging of guards and damage to exterior finishes
- Monitor if carpenter ants are still extant and terminate immediately
- Monitor crack on west portion and structurally stabilize
- Install fast response system (no sprinkler) for house
- Commission landscape survey to assess condition of existing species and to identify plants to be preserved, pruned or removed in order to restore the garden based on Binning's design intent or where existing vegetation threatens the physical integrity of the structure.
- Stabilize or restore masonry elements in garden including staircases, terraces, retaining walls
- Investigate condition of wooden garden elements such as trellises and determine course of action (restoration or rehabilitation)

5.1.2 Exterior and Interior Restoration and Rehabilitation

- Roof / Drainage / Chimney
 - Replace existing roof including sufficient slopes, permanent drainage system and new flashings; review condition of roof ventilation system; repair concrete chimney cap
 - Review options and benefits of roof insulation
 - Review option to install photovoltaic system on roof; coordinate with municipal regulations/Parks Canada
 - Rehabilitate perimeter drains below grade including renewal of concrete pavement to match original in shape but with slip resistant finish
- Structural Timber
 - When existing roof is removed: Review condition of structural timber for damage caused by infestation
- Electrical
 - When existing roof is removed: Assess electrical system from above and update where necessary

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- Exterior Walls
 - When existing roof is removed: Add cavity wall insulation (loose fill or batt) as required
 - Review option to insulate basement walls and/or ceiling
 - Repair damaged wood elements and replace deteriorated wood panels to match original
- Trellis
 - Investigate condition and attachment of existing wood trellis to roof structure and replace with new trellis to match the original, if necessary
- West Portion
 - Survey soil conditions below west portion of the house to determine the cause of subsidence; stabilize the structure and repair cracks in walls and ceilings
 - Repair wood frame windows and door in master bedroom
- Mural
 - Investigate paint system and restore exterior mural near front entrance; work to be done by painting conservator
- Kitchen
 - Review if existing linoleum floor can be removed to expose the original wood flooring
- Living Room
 - Remove efflorescence and stains from stone wall
 - Repair wood cladding in locations with infestation issues
- Exterior and Interior Wood Finishes
 - Remove later paint finishes on wood materials and varnish to match original design intent
 - Repaint remaining surfaces after proper surface preparation has been carried out

5.1.3 New Garage and Removed West Elevation Addition

A new three-car garage and caretaker's suite will be constructed on the site of the current 1966 garage. The new structure will reflect the form, scale and massing of the original garage and maintain the historic site relationship with the binning house.

The west elevation addition, which includes a bathroom and laundry room, will be removed and the elevation will be restored to its original appearance, with wooden cladding that matches the original finish.

5.1.4 New Infill Residence

As part of the revitalization of the site, a new residence will be built to the rear, lower level of the site, so that the views from the binning house will not be impeded. This residence conforms to standards 11 and 12 for related new construction.

5.2 MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

A maintenance schedule should be formulated that adheres to the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* (2010). Routine maintenance keeps water out of the building, which is the single most damaging element to a heritage building. Maintenance also prevents damage by sun, wind, snow, frost and all weather; prevents damage by insects and vermin; and aids in protecting all parts of the building against deterioration. The effort and expense

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expended on aggressive maintenance will not only lead to a higher degree of preservation, but also potentially save large amounts of money otherwise required for later repairs.

5.2.1 Permitting

Repair and maintenance activities, such as simple repair of materials in-kind, or repainting in the same colour, should be exempt from requiring city permits. Other more intensive activities will require the issuance of a Heritage Alteration Permit.

5.2.2 Cleaning

Following the *Standards and Guidelines*, be mindful of the principle that recommends 'using the gentlest means possible'. Any cleaning procedures should be undertaken on a routine basis, and should be undertaken with non-destructive methods. Cleaning of the building will be limited to the exterior material. All of these elements are usually easily cleaned, using a soft, natural bristle brush, without water, to remove dirt and other material. If a more intense cleaning is required, this can be accomplished with warm water, mild detergent (such as *Simple Green*) and a soft bristle brush. High-pressure power washing, abrasive cleaning or sandblasting should not be allowed under any circumstances.

5.2.3 Repairs And Replacement Of Deteriorated Materials

Interventions such as repairs and replacements must conform to the *Standards and Guidelines*. The building's character-defining elements – characteristics of the building which contribute to its heritage value such as materials, form, configuration, etc – must be conserved, referencing the following principals to guide interventions:

- An approach of minimal intervention must be adopted - where intervention is carried out it is by the least intrusive and gentlest means possible.
- Repair rather than replace character-defining elements.
- Repair character-defining elements using recognized conservation methods.
- Replace 'in kind' extensively deteriorated or missing parts of character-defining elements.
- Make interventions physically and visually compatible with the historic place.

5.2.4 Maintenance of Exteriors - Keeping the Water Out

Water, in all its forms and sources (rain, snow, frost, rising ground water, leaking pipes, back-splash, etc.) is the single most damaging element to historic buildings. Water supports all forms of biological decay such as rot, fungus, moss, lichen, termites, powder post beetle, other insects, etc. Keeping a building dry is the single best method of combatting biological decay.

The most common place for water to enter a building is through the roof and/or the guttering and downspout systems. An apparent minor roof or clogged gutter leak that is ignored can introduce enough moisture to support biological decay in a building on a scale necessitating removal of walls and floors, replacement of structural systems and services. Keeping roofs repaired or renewed and gutters frequently cleaned is a more cost-effective option.

Evidence of a small interior leak should be viewed as a warning for a much larger and worrisome water damage problem elsewhere and should be fixed immediately.

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5.3 INSPECTION CHECKLIST

The following checklist considers a wide range of potential problems specific to the building such as water/moisture penetration; material deterioration; structural deterioration; site and environmental issues. This checklist should be filled out by the owner on an annual basis and stored in the owner's Information File for the building.

EXTERIOR

SITE INSPECTION:

- Is the lot well drained?
- Do trees need pruning - are there dangerous dead limbs?
- Do plants hold water against the structure?
- Do trees overhang or touch the structure – rubbing damage?
- Can shrub and tree roots damage the structure?
- Is the paint peeling? Cracking?

FOUNDATION:

- Moisture: Is rising damp present?
- Is there backsplash from ground to structure?
- Does water drain away from foundation? Puddles?
- Is the moisture problem general or local?
- Is spalling present from freezing? (Flakes or powder?)
- Is efflorescence present?
- Is spalling present from sub-fluorescence?
- Is damp proof course present?
- Are there shrinkage cracks in the foundation?
 - Are there movement cracks in the foundation?
 - Is crack monitoring required?
 - Is uneven foundation settlement evident?
 - Do foundation openings (doors and windows) show: rust; rot; insect attack; paint failure; soil buildup; deflection of lintels?

STRUCTURE:

Wooden Elements (including trellises):

- Are there moisture problems present? (Rising damp, rain penetration, condensation moisture from plants, water run-off from roof, sills, or ledges?)
- Is wood in direct contact with the ground?
- Is there insect or fungal attack present? Where and probable source?
- Are there any other forms of biological attack? (Moss, birds, etc.) Where and probable source?
- Is the wood surface damaged from UV radiation? (bleached surface, loose surface fibres)
- Is the wood warped, cupped or twisted?

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- Is the wood split? Are there loose knots?
- Are nails pulling loose or rusted?
- Is there any staining of wood elements? Source?

Condition of Exterior Paint Materials:

- Paint shows: blistering, sagging or wrinkling, alligatoring, peeling. Cause?
- Paint has the following stains: rust, bleeding knots, mildew, etc. Cause?
- Paint cleanliness, especially at air vents?

Windows:

- Is there glass cracked or missing?
- If the glazing is puttied has it gone brittle and cracked? Fallen out? Painted to shed water?
- If the glass is secured by beading, are the beads in good condition?
- Is there condensation or water damage to the paint and wood?
- Are the sashes easy to operate? If hinged, do they swing freely?
- Is the frame free from distortion?
- Is the end grain properly sealed?
- Do wood sills show weathering or deterioration?
- Is the caulking between the frame and the siding in good condition?

Doors:

- Do the doors create a good seal when closed?
- Are the hinges sprung? In need of lubrication?
- Do locks and latches work freely?
- Are door frames wicking up water? Where? Why?
- Are door frames caulked at the siding? Is the caulking in good condition?
- What is the condition of the sill?

Gutters and Downspouts:

- Are downspouts leaking? Clogged? Are there holes or corrosion? (Any water against structure?)
- Are downspouts complete without any missing sections? Are they properly connected?
- Are eaves clean? Do they show any sagging?
- Is the water being effectively carried away from the downspout by a drainage system? Do downspouts drain completely away?

Roof:

- Is the leading edge of the roof wet?
- Is there evidence of biological attack? (Fungus, moss, birds, insects)
- Are the nails sound?
- Are flashings well sealed?
- Are metal joints and seams sound?
- Do the closed soffits show any signs of water damage? Insect or bird infestation?

Entryway:

- Are the steps safe? Handrail secure?

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INTERIOR

Basement level:

- Are there signs of moisture damage to the walls? Is masonry cracked, discoloured, spalling? Is wood cracked, peeling rotting? Does it retain moisture when surroundings are dry?
- Are there signs of past flooding, or leaks from the floor above? Is the floor damp?
- Are walls even or buckling or cracked? Is the floor cracked or heaved?
- Are there signs of insect or rodent infestation?

Main level:

- Materials: plaster, wood, metal, masonry – are they sound, or uneven, cracked, out of plumb or alignment; are there signs of settlement, old, or recent (bulging walls, long cracks, etc)?
- Finishes: paints, stains, etc. – are they dirty, peeling, stained, cracked?
- Are there any signs of water leakage or moisture damage? (Mould? Water-stains?)

Concealed spaces:

- Is light visible through walls, to the outsider or to another space?
- Are the ventilators for windowless spaces clear and functional?
- Do pipes or exhausts pass through concealed spaces without leaks?
- Are wooden elements soft, damp, cracked? Is metal material rusted, paint peeling or off altogether?
- Infestations - are there signs of birds, bats, insects, rodents, past or present?

5.4 MAINTENANCE PLAN

Daily

- Observations noted during cleaning (cracks; damp, dripping pipes; malfunctioning hardware; etc.) to be noted in log book or building file.
- Usual cleaning, as required.

Weekly

- Clean gutters during periods of heavy leaf fall.
- Clean air filters as necessary.

Monthly

- Have all rainwater gutters, downspouts, drains cleaned out.
- Lubricate any mechanical heating, pumps, etc, as required.
- Major issues entered into the logbook.

Quarterly

- Check roofs inside and outside including gutters, valleys, downspouts, etc.
- Check doors for closing and locking.
- Clean light fixtures.

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Semi-annually

- Semi-annual inspection and report with special focus on seasonal issues.
- Thorough cleaning of gutters and downspouts to cope with winter rains and summer storms.
- Check smoke detectors.
- Check condition of weather sealants (Fall).
- Service mechanical units such as heating (Fall).
- Clean the exterior using a soft bristle broom/brush.

Annually (Spring)

- Inspect foundation for cracks, deterioration or loss of material.
- Inspect windows for paint and glazing compound failure, wood decay and proper operation.
- Complete annual inspection and report for Information File.
- Clean out of all perimeter drains and rainwater systems.
- Overhaul electric system; change light bulbs and tubes.
- Check all fire extinguishers and have access to them.
- Touch up worn paint on the building's exterior.
- Oil all locks, hinges, etc.
- Service mechanical units such as air conditioning/pumps etc.
- Check for plant, insect or animal infestation.
- Routine cleaning, as required.

Five-Year Cycle

- A full inspection report by a heritage professional should be undertaken every five years, comparing records from previous inspections and the original work, particularly monitoring structural movement and durability of utilities.
- Repaint window sash windows every five to fifteen years. With proper maintenance, wood windows have the potential to last indefinitely.

Ten-Year Cycle

- Check condition of roof every ten years after last replacement.

Twenty-Year Cycle

- Confirm condition of roof and estimate effective lifespan. Replace when required.

Storm Inspections (as required)

- After any storm, inspection must occur for any damage. Gutters and roofs need to be checked and cleaned.

Major Maintenance Work (as Required)

- Thorough repainting, re-roofing, gutter, downspout and drain replacement; replacement of deteriorated building materials etc.

BINNING HOUSE CONSERVATION PLAN

6.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the following people for their generous time and support throughout the Binning House Conservation Plan work that was completed in 2011-12:

- Binning House Conservation Plan Advisory Committee:
 - Tamsin Baker, formerly with The Land Conservancy
 - Shelley Bruce, Parks Canada
 - Stephen Mikicich, District of West Vancouver
 - Adele Weder
 - Darrin Morrison, West Vancouver Museum
 - Matthew Soules

- Binning House Conservation Plan 2017
 - Jesse Saniuk, owner
 - Jonathan Choo, designer

BINNING HOUSE CONSERVATION PLAN

7.0 REFERENCES

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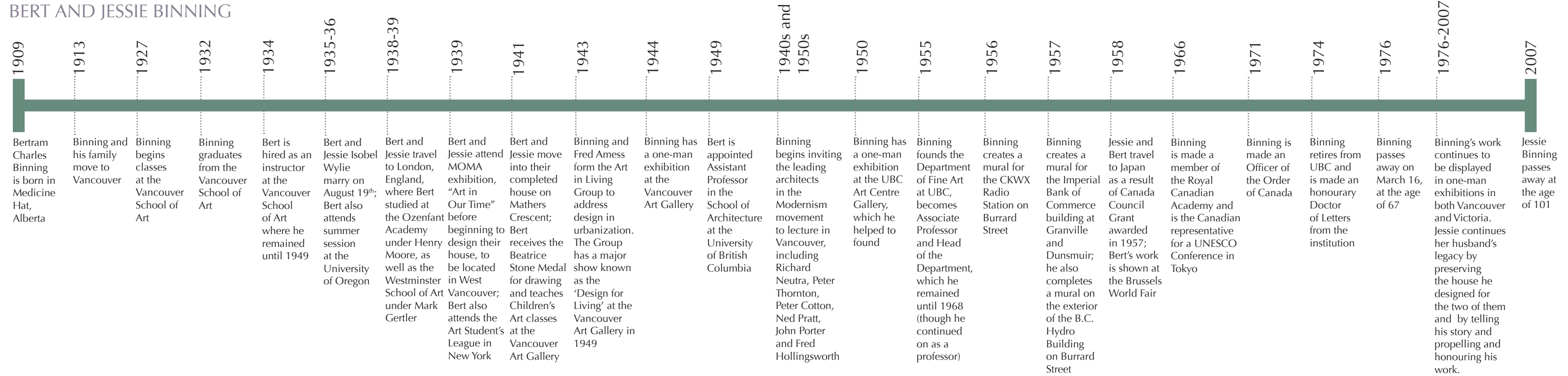
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- *National Historic Site Statement of Significance*, Parks Canada
- *Cultural Resource Management Policy*, Parks Canada
- *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* (2010), Parks Canada

Additional Sources

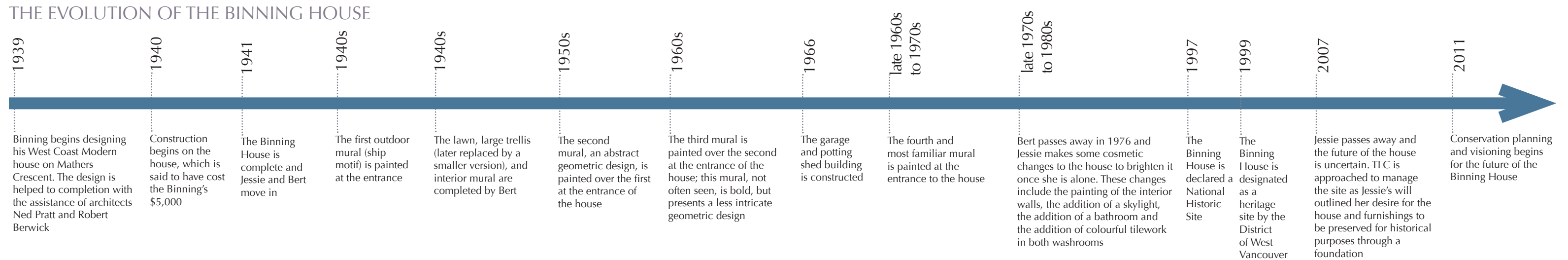
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8.0 THE BINNINGS AND BINNING HOUSE CHRONOLOGY

BERT AND JESSIE BINNING



THE EVOLUTION OF THE BINNING HOUSE



9.0 THE BINNING HOUSE IMAGE APPENDIX

IMAGES OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE HOUSE



Construction image, Bert writes 'The studio (and north light) where from great works of art are being produced! Because I know (Bertie in Doorway)', ca. 1940-41, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Construction image, showing Bertie, Lacey (dog) and the construction of the exterior yard, ca. 1940s, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives

IMAGES OF BERT AND JESSIE IN THE YARD



Bert and Jessie in the yard, ca. 1940s, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Bert's brother and Jessie in the side (east) yard, with Lacey (dog), ca. 1940s, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Jessie and Lacey (dog) on 'new' lawn, looking east, ca. 1940s, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Jessie relaxing in backyard, ca. 1940s, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Bert and Jessie in the yard, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



The Binnings on the lawn, summer 1948, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives

GRAHAM WARRINGTON'S IMAGES OF THE HOUSE AND THE BINNINGS



Front of house, Graham Warrington Image, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Bert in hallway with his own artwork, Graham Warrington Image, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Close-up of 1st Binning Mural, Graham Warrington Image, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Main washroom, Graham Warrington Image, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Living room/hallway, Graham Warrington Image, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Hallway, Graham Warrington Image, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Bert and Jessie in backyard, Graham Warrington Image, ca. 1945, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Kitchen, Graham Warrington Image, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Living room, Graham Warrington Image, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Living room, Graham Warrington Image, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Jessie's bedroom, Graham Warrington Image, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives

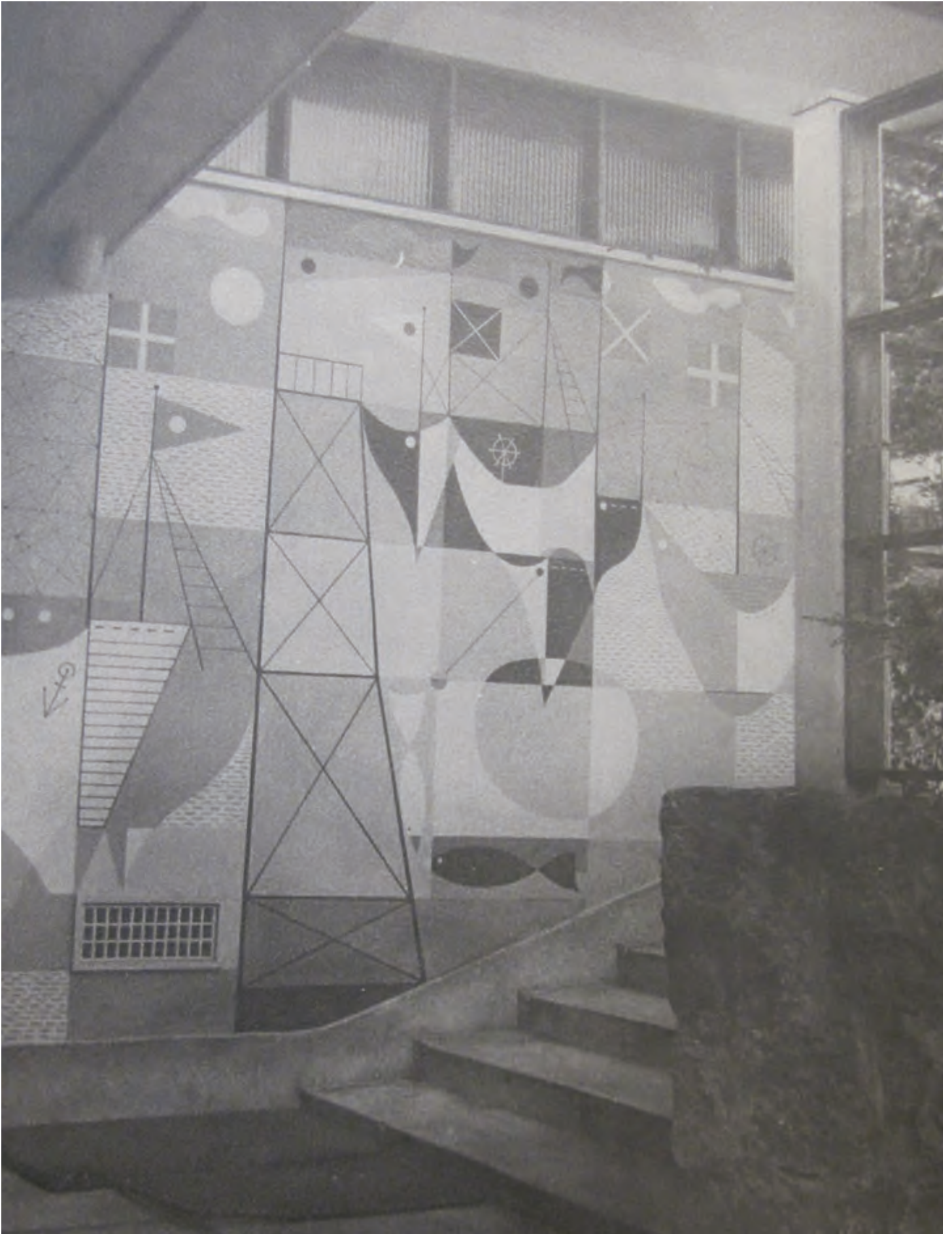


Jessie's bedroom, Graham Warrington Image, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives

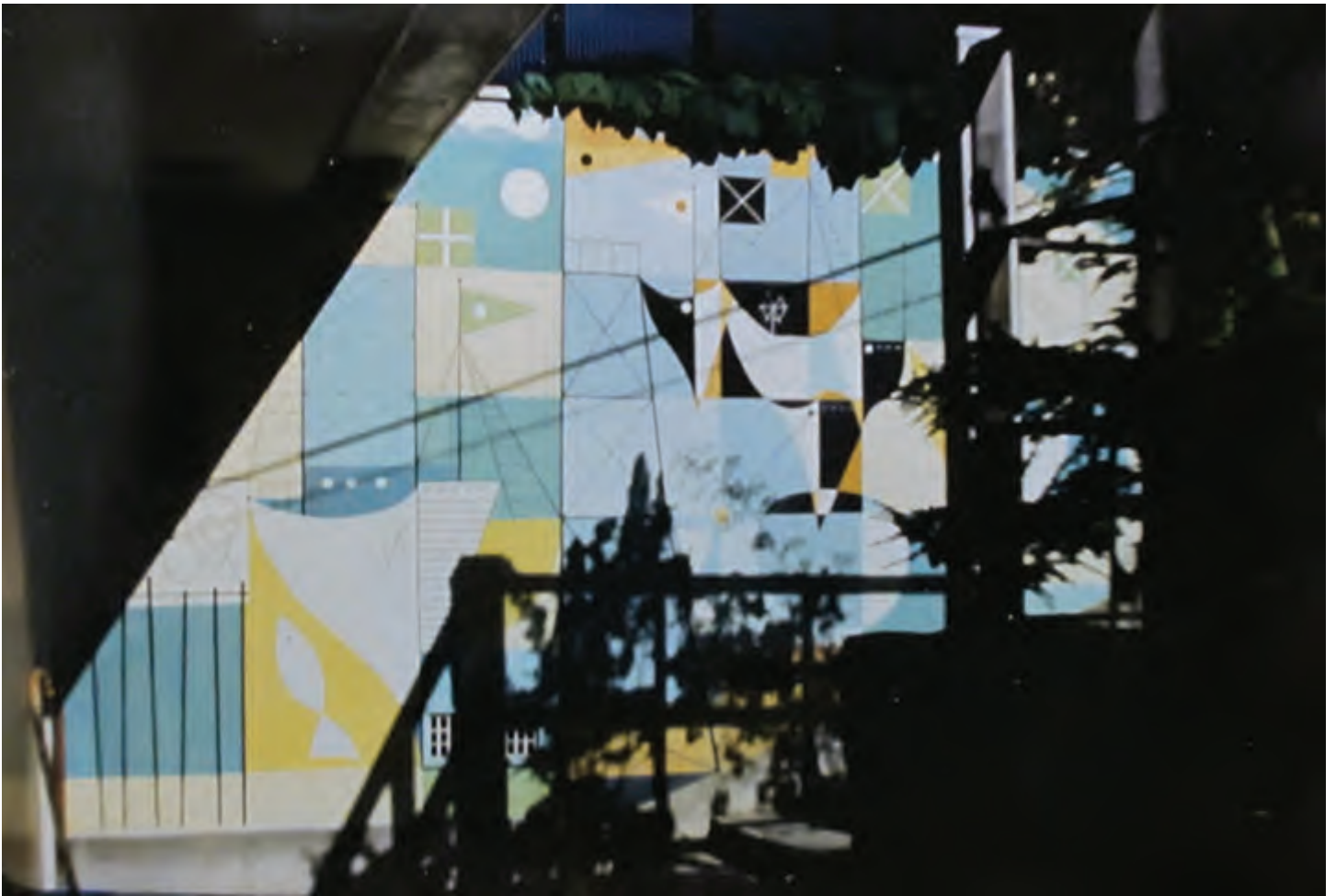


Jessie and Bert Binning in the garden, Graham Warrington Image, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives

THE MURALS



First mural, black and white, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



First mural, colour slide, Robert Desaulniers, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



First mural, colour slide, Robert Desaulniers, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



First mural, colour slide, Robert Desaulniers, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Second mural, colour slide, Robert Desaulniers, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Second mural, colour slide, Robert Desaulniers, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Second mural showing yellow door, colour slide, Robert Desaulniers, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Third mural, before current mural was painted, colour slide, Robert Desaulniers, 1960s, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Current mural before Gordon Smith's restoration, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Current mural post-Gordon Smith's restoration, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives

BERT AND HIS STUDIO



Bert in his studio, 1973, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Bert in his studio, 1973, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Bert in his studio, 1973, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Bert's studio, slide in colour, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives

A Pioneering Project

THE B. C. BINNING HOUSE

Time Confirms its Principles



Mr and Mrs Binning and guest seated on the main terrace of the Binning house with its sweeping view of the Bay and Gulf. Glass doors open into the living room. In summer the doors are left wide open to make the terrace a continuation of the living room. Overhead are grapevines on a trellis. The living room looks over the hills to the sea.



1 You park your car by the carport on the road above, open the wide wooden gate, and below is the Binning house. To the right are lawn and vegetable gardens, above are flowering dogwoods. Full-length windows on the right side of the house provide north light to the artist's studio. From the gate you can just glimpse the wall-size Binning mural at the front entrance. In the background is the sea off West Point Grey.

By JOHN WOODWORTH, Architectural Subjects Editor.

THIS IS THE STORY of a house that was a pioneer . . . a pace-setter . . . in West Coast contemporary design 10 years ago and is still thoroughly modern.

B. C. Binning paintings are well known to most British Columbians. But what most British Columbians don't know is that artist Binning turns his hand to architecture, too. His own home in West Vancouver and several others nearby are the spare-time product of Mr Binning's drafting board. Last year his architectural activities caught the attention of the UBC School of Architecture with the result that he is now a staff member of the School, instructing in architectural design.

Mr Binning's interest in architecture dates back to before the war when he and Mrs Binning were thinking of building a house. Naturally the appearance of the house was foremost in their minds, but the plan had to combine an artist's work-a-day studio with comfortable living quarters.

The Binnings spent hours looking at new homes all over Vancouver. They thought of Cape Cod, and then Colonial, and then French Provincial . . . but nothing seemed quite to satisfy their requirements. Undecided, they left for a two-year visit to Europe. While there they took time out to study the new work of European architects. In Europe then a move was afoot to develop an entirely new kind of architecture, an architecture that exploited honestly all the attractive properties of glass, steel, and concrete, the building materials of the day. Mr Binning looked, listened, and thought . . . when he finally came back to Vancouver he felt he was nearing the solution to his problems.

If European architects were developing a new architecture with their local building materials, why shouldn't he design a new style of British Columbia house with B.C. building materials?

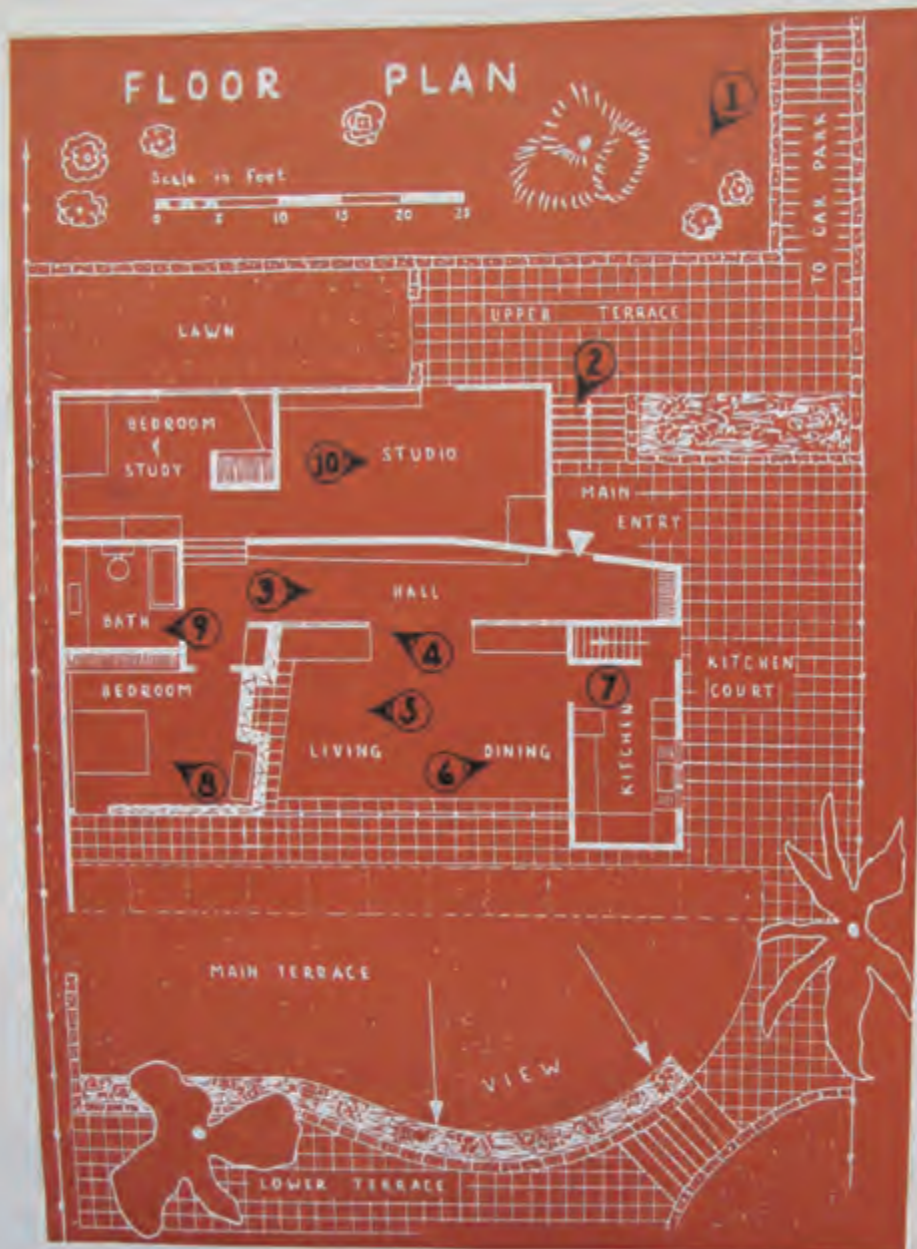
Well, that's just what Mr Binning has done. His house is a truly British Columbia one for plywood, cedar V-joint, granite and surrounding evergreens can make it. As you follow the pictures through the house you'll find a refreshingly new design that will make you wonder why we in British Columbia were so long developing a distinctive British Columbia home architecture.

2

A closeup now of the main entry. We guarantee you that this is the only house in Vancouver with a wall-size Binning abstract painted on the entrance wall. The mural is in full color, even to recognizable portions of ship flags. Above the mural are hop vines trailed around the base of clerestory windows that light part of the studio. Centre is the entry door leading to main hall. Concrete flagged terrace leads around to kitchen court at left out of sight. Notice the delicate texture effect achieved by the cedar V-joint beside entry door. Black line above entry door is a wire screen vent that allows air to circulate between the joists of the flat-roofed house, thus preventing moisture condensation and subsequent dry rot.



All photography by GRAHAM WARRINGTON, AIBP, ARPS



The Binning house was skillfully designed to make the most of a sloping lot. Mr Binning believes the same house could be built today for about \$10,000. Numbered arrows refer to the ten accompanying photographs.

3

Now we're through the front door and at the other end of the main hall. Here's why we're so fond of the Binning house as a piece of B C home architecture. The simplest and commonest building materials have been combined by the artist into a real work of art. Counter top on the left is varnished fir with a little color rubbed in. Bookshelves and storage cupboards are fir plywood . . . but where the rest of us would paint them all one color, Mr Binning turns the cupboard doors into a delicate piece of design with a few brushfuls of white paint. Above are clerestory windows lighting the hall. To the right in the centre of the hall is entrance leading to living-dining room. Reeded glass lets light through from living room.



4

This picture was taken from the entrance between the hall and the living-dining room. In the background are stairs leading to the studio and a combined bedroom and study. Doors on left at back of hall (out of sight) lead to bathroom and bedroom. Ceiling is rough plaster, wall at back is plaster, and wall at right is varnished cedar V-joint. The V-joint forms an excellent background for artist Binning's amusing pen and ink sketches and colorful abstract paintings. In fact the centre hall is really a miniature art gallery, with filtered light coming through the reeded glass onto the long wall of paintings. Mr Binning, you will note, knows how to plan a house that is efficient as well as aesthetically pleasing.

5

Here's the living half of the living-dining room, and doesn't it look inviting! When you consider how appealing the living room is in a black and white photo, you can imagine how much more appealing it is in full color. The fireplace wall, for example, is a rich patternwork of vari-colored stones. The wood frame holding the glass above the built-in couch is varnished fir with a touch of red stain. Even the simple built-in radio is a color contrast in red cedar and painted fir. Rugs are beige, floor is oak, ceiling is white rough plaster. On the left is a full wall of glass doors opening out onto the main terrace. In summer when the glass doors are open the living room becomes an integral part of the garden plan.



6

The dining half of the dining-living room. To the left in background is another example of the artistry Mr Binning can work with paint and plywood: the built-in buffet is made of common wood; the built-in buffet top is varnished with British Columbia fir. Buffet top is varnished with color rubbed in, doors are painted white, door pulls and structural outlines are natural fir . . . result a beautiful piece of dining room furniture. Light fixture built in above buffet is a low-cast commercial bowl fixture fitted with a silvered light globe. Door at rear leads to kitchen. Dining table is B C fir, as is coffee table in right foreground. Chairs are Chinese wicker, bought before the war.

7

Attractive centre of culinary activity, the Binning kitchen is another example of an artistic use of fir plywood. Unity in the overall kitchen design is achieved by repetition of two or three standard cupboard door sizes. Besides being a good piece of design the kitchen is a very efficient functional unit. Stove and sink are built in flush to the counter and all at one height. Also built in, but not in the picture are Bendix, laundry tub, and refrigerator. Kitchen casement windows open onto a private court yard. Two doors at the other end lead to the basement and the outdoors. Ceiling is white plaster, walls have accent of pale yellow, floor is linoleum with touch of yellow in green.



8

Here's a shot taken from the main terrace looking through the window into the front bedroom. You can see our photographer worked himself into ecstasies over this photograph even to the careful placing of the dressing gown on the bed and the carpet slippers, just so, below. Reflected in the large green bottle on the window sill are lawn, flowers and evergreens from the main terrace . . . large casement windows pass this view into the bedroom. In background is built-in storage wall; horizontal lines are drawer handles. Walls are cedar V-joint, floor is edge grain fir, carpet is Chinese. Door on right leads into main hallway. Unseen door to the left opens onto the terrace.



9

When B. C. Binning designs a house he designs it all, even to the bookshelf in the bathroom! The built-in sink and mirror unit contains storage for linen, towels, facecloths, etc. Counter is linoleum, basin is a small low-cast sink. Surrounding the mirror is varnished cedar V-joint, with built-in light fixture overhead. The awkward problem of where to place the bathroom window is solved in this house . . . light and ventilation come from clerestory (pronounced 'clear story') windows overhead. The clerestory is a continuation of windows over the main hall. Bathroom floor cover is linoleum, walls are painted plaster. Built-in tub is in right foreground. Porcelainware is white.



10

After visiting every room in the house we finally come across the artist . . . this time passing for us, in his studio. It was summer when the photos were taken and Mr Binning was on 'holiday' from the university . . . his holiday consists of working in the studio for long periods of time producing more of the famous Binning paintings. The studio photograph may help you to visualize the orientation of the rest of the rooms. Above Mr Binning's head are the small windows you saw in photo No. 2 with the hop vines growing around them. Door on left leads onto upper terrace, providing an entrance to the studio separate from the rest of the house.



JESSIE AND BERT BINNING, THE HOUSE, AND THE YARD



Jessie in front of house, note the unpainted mural wall, slide in colour, 1941, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Robert Desaulniers slide image, main bedroom, note painted divider, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Robert Desaulniers slide image, desk area, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Robert Desaulniers slide image, hallway, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Terrace, overlooking Jessie, Bert says 'note combination of stone and wood,' Vancouver Art Gallery



Robert Desaulniers slide image, garden, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



View from the rear garden to the south, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives



Front of house, note the unpainted mural wall, circa 1940s, Courtesy of TLC



Jessie in the front garden, circa 1940s, Courtesy of TLC



Jessie in the front garden, circa 1940s, Courtesy of TLC



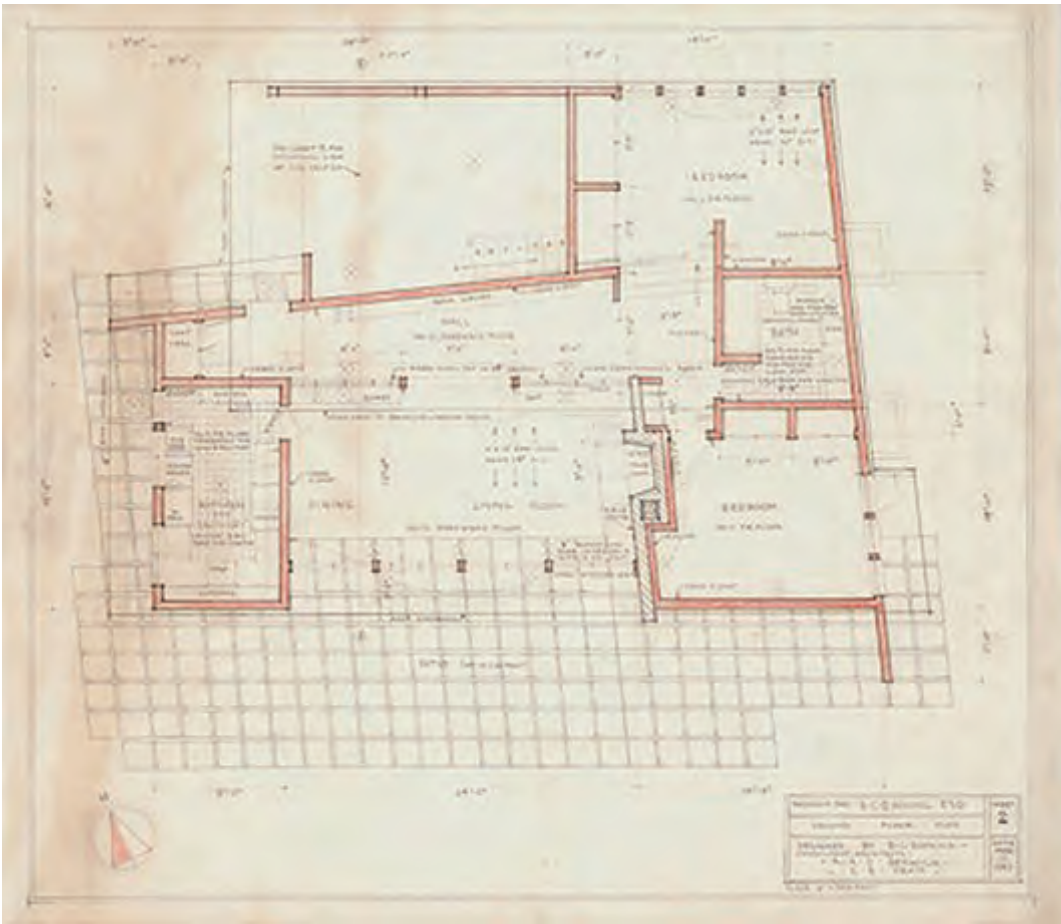
Jessie in the rear yard, 2007, Courtesy of TLC



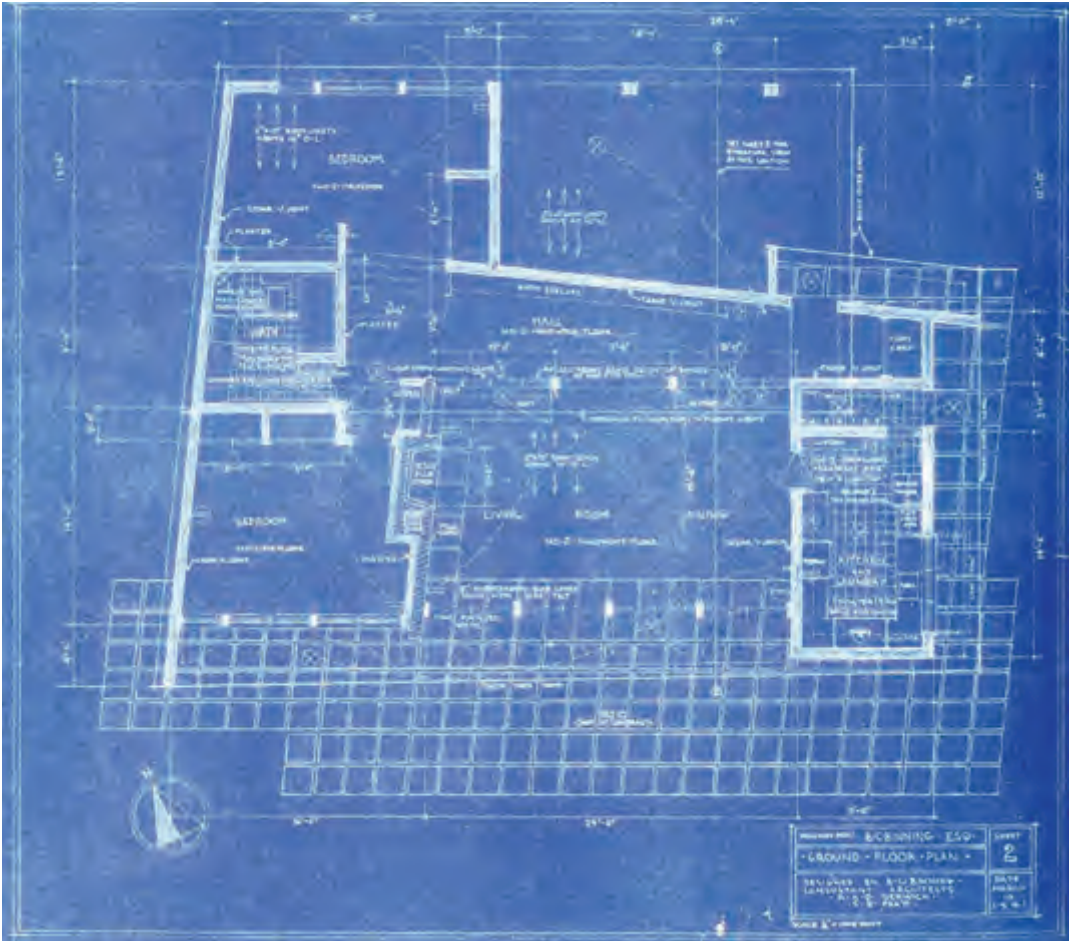
Binning House, Canadian Architect.com, "Surrounded by Paintbrushes, Canvas and Other Tools of His Trade, Artist B.C. Binning Is Seated in His Home Studio in This Photograph From 1950"



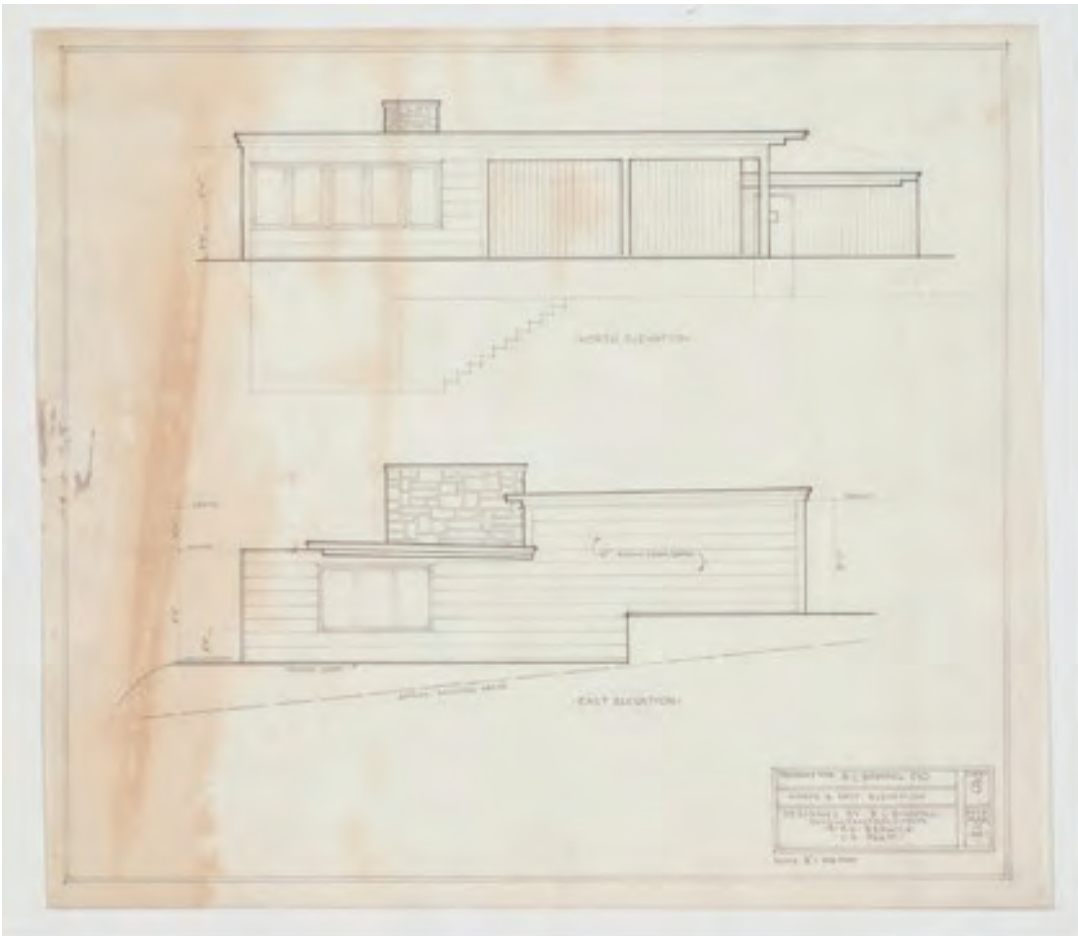
Binnings and their house, 1945



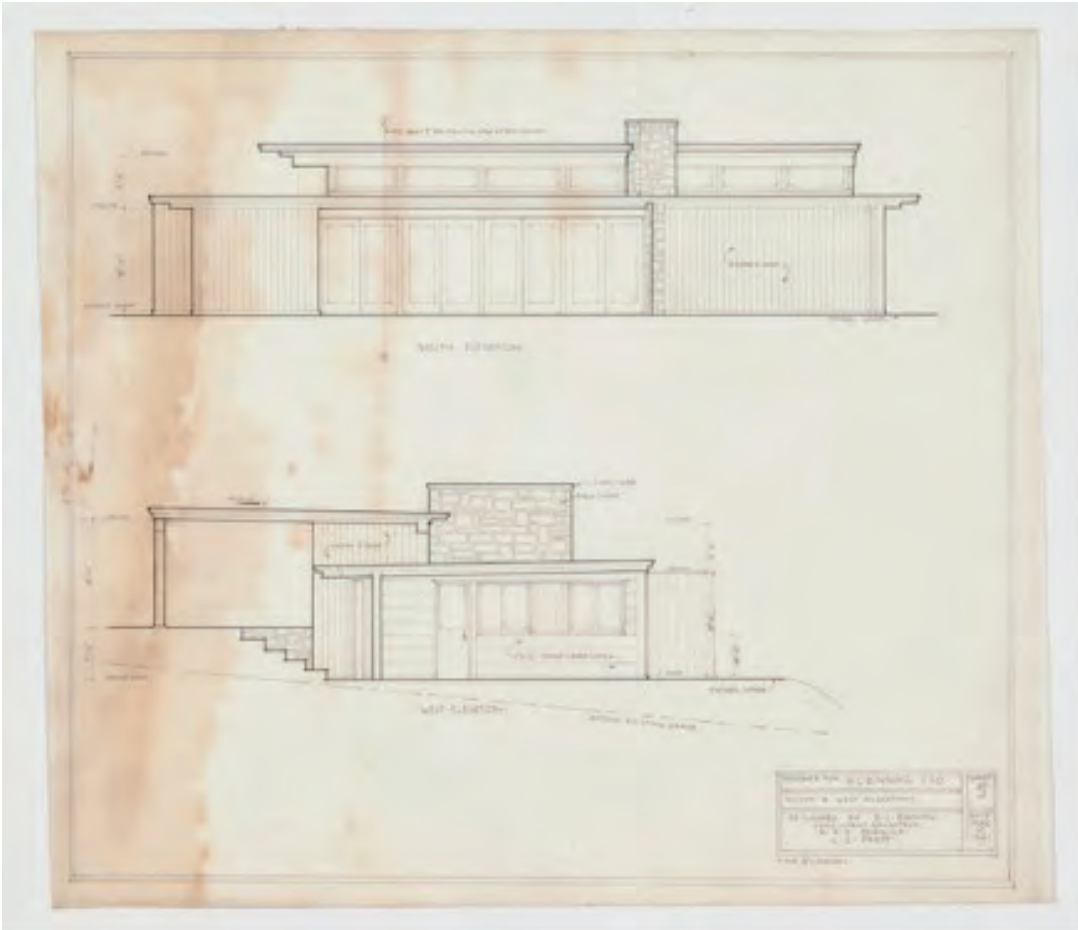
B.C. Binning House plan, shown opposite to the final layout



B.C. Binning House plan, shown similar to the final layout



B.C. Binning House elevations



B.C. Binning House elevations



Bert lounging in chair with cigarette, Vancouver Art Gallery Archives

