

South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club

Location: 2290 Cowichan Bay Road, Cowichan Bay, BC

Formally Recognized: 2015/07/08

Other Names: Not applicable

Construction Dates: 1906; 1962



North Facing View of Grass Courts



South Facing View of Grass Courts

Statement of Significance for South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club

Description of the Historic Place

The South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club is a tennis club with a wooden two-storey clubhouse, nine tennis courts, and herbaceous gardens all overlooking Cowichan Bay. The property is located on the scenic Cowichan Bay Road, just outside the historic seaside village of Cowichan Bay, in British Columbia. This historic place is specific to the club site, the grass courts, and the herbaceous gardens.

Heritage Values

The South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club has significant heritage value in its continuous use to the community as a source of recreation and social activities. As it was formed by early settlers, the club represents the social development of the Cowichan Valley, specifically the area of Cowichan Bay. An association with important historical people has greatly contributed to the current state of the club and is therefore a source of pride to community members. The impressive quality of this historic place has immense heritage value and it greatly contributes to the character of the community.

The herbaceous garden and sentinel mature maple trees have significant value in their long-lasting contribution to the overall ambience and character of the club.

The South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club is recognized as having the oldest continuously-functioning grass tennis courts in Canada. The South Cowichan Lawn Tennis clubhouse has been altered over the years, but there is significant value in the continued use of the site as a community gathering place. As such, the club provides a rare insight on the social and recreational gatherings of early communities throughout the Cowichan Valley. The pristine condition of the courts allows visitors to follow in the footsteps of early settlers with a game of lawn tennis. There is immense value in experiencing heritage instead of simply viewing it.

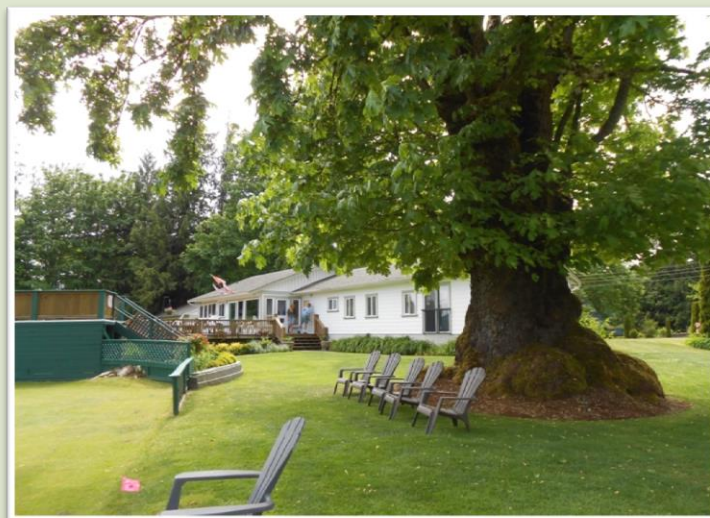
The original courts were built on Augustus Pimbury's farm in 1887, but the immense popularity led the club to move to a new location on George Treffry Corfield's donated land. The new courts opened in 1907 and continue to serve the community as a place of leisure and social activities. As the club was founded by early settlers of the area, a connection exists between the South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club and the earliest cultural and community development of the Cowichan Valley. The club symbolizes the importance of recreation to the community and the growth in popularity of social community events.

The popularity of the South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club has attracted many important historic figures to visit the famed courts. Robert Service, the internationally famous "Bard of the Yukon", settled in the Cowichan Valley from 1899 to 1903 and was an active tennis player at the club. Nationally-ranked tennis star Kay Wilson, who was known as a four-time national tennis champion and a recipient of the Distinguished Service Award from Tennis Canada, was a regular member of the club. American Senator and nationally-ranked tennis player, Don Wilner was a member of the club for 57 years. These historic figures all discovered something special about the South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club that had them returning to play on the courts for many years.

Character-Defining Elements

Key elements that define the heritage character of the South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club include:

- The quality of the lawn courts
- The continuous use of the clubhouse site as a community gathering place
- The mature herbaceous gardens, both as a source of ambiance and as a culturally significant site
- The mature maple trees, as historically significant natural structures
- The unobstructed view of the Cowichan Bay estuary



View of the Clubhouse

Historical Information

Timeline

- 1887. The South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club was created.
- 1906. The new South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club courts and pavilion were built on their new and present day location.
- 1907. The official opening of the new club location.
- 1950. During the 50s, the South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club underwent numerous revitalization and construction projects, including revitalizing the courts and building a new modern clubhouse with a fireplace, modern kitchen, and indoor plumbing.
- 1962. The club's 75th Jubilee was celebrated and the new clubhouse was completed.
- 1963. The Lt Governor visited the club to celebrate the 75th anniversary (one year later due to unfortunate circumstances).
- 1987. The club's 100th anniversary was celebrated with international players and special guests.
- 1991. A commercial was shot at the South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club for CP Airlines.
- 1992. The South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club received Heritage Designation status from the Province of B.C.

Important Facts

- The South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club was created by Augustus Pimbury, with the help of Fredrick Maitland-Dougall and George Treffry Corfield.
- The present day location of the club is located on George Treffry Corfield's original farm.
- In the 1950s, the South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club was in a terrible state and Jeffrey Hunter revitalized and rebuilt it over a ten year period.



View of the Mature Maple Trees

Current Information

Function

- The South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club is still functioning as a tennis club.
- The club welcomes guests and new members to play or visit.
- For information on the South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club visit: www.lawntennis.ca.

Construction

- After a flood during the winter of 2006-2007, the clubhouse was raised onto new foundations to prevent future damage.

Heritage Status

- The eight grass courts are locally recognized as Heritage Designation by the CVRD.
- All nine of the courts are provincially recognized as Heritage Designation by the Province of B.C.



View of Grass Courts and Cowichan Bay