

# Lardeau Valley Museum Building (formerly the Gerrard Hatchery Residence)

## Statement of Significance

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*August 21, 2023*

### Description of Historic Place

The Gerrard Hatchery Residence is a two-storey wood-frame, hip roof house situated along Highway 31 North in the community of Meadow Creek, in the West Kootenays region of British Columbia. It is one of several salvaged historic buildings relocated from within the Lardeau Valley area to this site to make up the open-air Lardeau Valley Museum. The Gerrard Hatchery Residence functions as the museum building and office.

### Heritage Values of Historic Place

The historic place is situated in the homelands of the Ktunaxa and Sinixt peoples which overlap in some areas, and encompass parts of the area now known as the Columbia Basin of British Columbia. Once non-indigenous prospectors and settlers began to arrive to the area in the 1800s, shifts in economy, pressure on natural resources, newly introduced diseases, and the policies of the Canadian Government contributed to a significantly diminished Indigenous presence around this place today.

The building itself stands testament to the diversification of settler economic activities in the Lardeau Valley which originated in the 1890s with



local gold exploration and mining, sparking the first non-Indigenous settlements - Argenta, Lardeau, Duncan City and Trout Lake City - but which expanded into logging, fisheries and agriculture as mining activities declined in the 20th century. It was constructed to serve as the residence for a hatchery and egg collecting station at the community of Gerrard, which was located at the south tip of Trout Lake and was established circa 1893 under the name Selkirk but renamed Gerard in 1901. The Gerrard Hatchery Resi-

dence was constructed in 1918 during the 20 years that the operations were run by the federal government (1912-1932). It later became a private home to Mrs. Brandon, the Gerrard Postmaster's widow, from 1949 until circa 1963.

The building is further valued for being one of only two known surviving structures of the community of Gerrard, an abandoned ghost town where no remaining buildings or evidence of infrastructure remain. During its boom years, Gerrard boasted a large sawmill, a railway station, a post office, two hotels, various residences, and the trout hatchery, however the sawmill closed in 1920, the CPR abandoned the Lardeau–Gerrard line in 1942 (Gerrard was the terminus of the Arrowhead & Kootenay line) and the hatchery's last year of operation was 1954.

The Gerrard Hatchery Residence is important for its association with the Lardeau Valley Historical Society (LVHS) and their early heritage conservation advocacy and mobilization in the area. The LVHS was formed in 1978 with the objective of preserving and protecting heritage sites and buildings within the Lardeau Valley region, and in October 1993, they saved this then abandoned building through relocation to Meadow Creek.

Together with the Gerrard Hatchery Outbuilding, the Bosworth Shed and the Billy Clark Cabin, the Gerrard Hatchery Residence makes up the salvaged, relocated structures of the open-air Lardeau Valley Museum located in Meadow Creek, operated by the LVHS. It is valued as the first building brought to the Lardeau Valley Museum site where it was restored and opened to the public in 2000, and where it today serves as the main Museum Building containing a small office, archives, and exhibit space. Although removed from their original context, this collection of buildings stand testament to an important array of lost or abandoned communities and ways of life of this unique region, obliterated by the Columbia River Treaty which relocated and flooded many communities in the late 1960s to accommodate the Duncan, Keenleyside, Mica, and Libby Dams, or abandoned due to significant local economic shifts as in the case of Gerrard and other regional mining and milling ghost towns. The historical context of these buildings is brought to life through the experiential educational programming, publicly accessible historic records and interpretive signage of the Lardeau Valley Museum, which offers effective and immersive cultural tourism and local education opportunities.

Aesthetically, the Gerrard Hatchery Residence is valued for its classical box design also known as the American Four Square or the Edwardian Box. This house design was popular in BC from the early 1900s until the end of World War I and featured a box form, a hip roof, classical columns and often small roof dormers.

Finally, this historic place holds scientific and environmental value for its traditional construction techniques, for its historic, locally-sourced, low energy-intensive materials – their quality, durability and repairability – for the embodied energy (the total energy expended over the more than 110 years lifecycle) held in the building, and for representing the historic practice of house moving which remains a relevant conservation strategy today.

## **Character-Defining Elements**

The character-defining elements of the Lardeau Valley Museum Building include:

- Continuous residential use by citizens since the 1890s
- Location at the Lardeau Valley Museum site since 1993 as part of conservation efforts of the Lardeau Valley Historical Society
- Residential form and massing as expressed in its 2-storey height, box shape and hip roof with a gabled dormer
- Wood-frame construction and finishes
- Stone veneer at foundation
- Hip roof with cedar shakes
- Single gabled dormer at front
- Horizontal drop siding
- Square trim, corner and roofline trim
- Partial front porch with gabled roof and wrap around soffit return
- Square front porch columns
- Back porch with shed roof
- Wood hung windows with wood storms. The upper and lower sashes of the windows are divided into two lights (2/2). The storms are simple 1/1 lights.
- Interior chimney
- Residential use from 1918-circa 1963
- Institutional use since 2000

## Resources

Ghost Towns of the Lardeau, BRITISH COLUMBIA video footage: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAa-vcUyx4IM>

Nesteroff, Greg. 2014. Nelson Star newspaper. <https://www.nelsonstar.com/community/gerrard-changed-names-four-times/>