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Mr. R. Linzey
Director of Heritage Branch
Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resources and Operations
2975 Jutland Road
Victoria, BC
V8R 1G2

5 March 2020

Dear Richard,

RE: GS20HER110 Professional Heritage Consulting Services – 4.2.9 Atlin

Please find our observations and recommendations attached regarding the historic area of Atlin. These recommendations reflect our conversations with Branch staff and members of the Atlin Historical Society during the site visit we made in September of 2019.

Please don't hesitate to contact either Ben or me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely yours,



Gordon Macdonald

Pp. Ben Gourley

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Fig 1 - The picturesque waterfront of Atlin and the M.V. Tarahne in pride of place - September 2019

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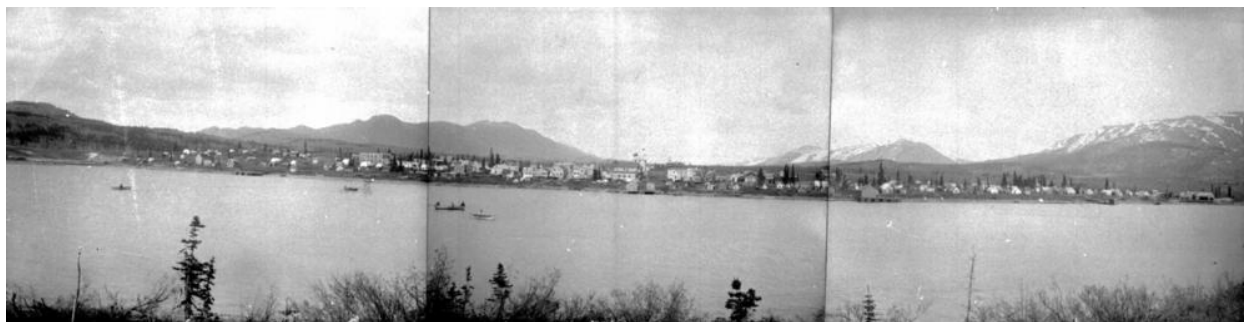


Figure 2 - The town of Atlin at the end of the Goldrush years, 22 June 1900. BC Archives, G-04696

Executive Summary

In September 2019 Heritageworks worked with staff from Heritage Branch and members of the Atlin Historical Society (AHS) to undertake a rapid assessment of several historic assets in and around the town of Atlin, BC. The purposes of the assessment were to:

- Understand and record the current condition of the buildings and other large artefacts owned and managed by AHS including the Courthouse, Atlin Museum, Globe theater, M.V. Tarahne, M.V., Atlino and others;
- Understand the context of the structures and other cultural assets that survive in the surrounding landscape;
- Make high-level recommendations for prioritized repairs;
- Assess the condition of the Taku Railway and develop a conceptual repair strategy for discussion with various government agencies including BC Parks.

The modern town of Atlin sits within the traditional territory of the Tlingit speaking People and the Taku River Tlingit First Nation (TRTFN) is situated at the southern end of the townsite. The historic town of Atlin was founded during the Atlin Gold Rush in 1898 in the context of the Klondike Gold Rush 1896-99. There followed a period of prosperity in the early 1920's when Atlin became a popular tourist destination associated with the White Pass and Yukon Route. Gold mining and tourism remain the primary economic activities of the region to this day.

Our assessment concluded that the buildings and structures within this large and complex historic landscape range in condition from excellent to extremely poor and at-risk. The boom and bust history of Atlin provides a useful metaphor for the care and of its cultural heritage. Previous periods of intense conservation activity, community engagement and the availability of funding can be seen reflected in the quality and ambition of several notable projects within the town (e.g., restoration of the M.V. Atlino, stabilization of the M.V. Tarahne, rehabilitation of the Globe Theatre, etc.). These successes stand in contrast to several other historically significant structures and historic objects that have been abandoned and are now at risk of being lost altogether. The overall impression is one of heritage triage in which limited resources are focused on a few projects for the best perceived benefit to the local community. Priority is given to projects that either provide community amenity or opportunities for

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income through tourism and are only undertaken when a local champion can be identified to lead the effort. While the local community is talented and self-reliant, the sorts of specialist skills necessary for historic conservation are not always available. The remote location of Atlin means that bringing craftspeople from Whitehorse or further abroad is expensive and complex. Seasonal town population and intense periods of industry activity during the summer months further contribute to the logistical complexity of organizing conservation work at Atlin. Ultimately, there is a high cost premium and relatively short window of seasonal opportunity associated with working here.

Since 1967 the Atlin Community Improvement District (ACID) has been the only local service provider to the town of Atlin (e.g., drainage, fire protection, sidewalks, waste disposal, street lighting and waterworks). In 2008 the scope of services provided by ACID was expanded to assume the responsibilities of the Atlin Advisory Planning Commission. In the absence of a local government, the Province is the jurisdictional authority.

BC Parks, Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC), ACID, AHS and TRTFN all have roles to play in the management of cultural heritage within the region. There appears to be poor connectivity and little collaboration between the various parties at present; therefore, this represents an area of great opportunity.

Our observation of the Atlin area is that management of cultural resources has become compartmentalised and siloed at the detriment of good conservation practice. For example, AHS is primarily focused on colonial heritage and the management of gold rush era assets in the town of Atlin. These assets have relationships to the surrounding cultural landscape and other places/objects outside of the townsite that add to their significance. Similarly, while the colonial history of Atlin is important, there has been Indigenous land use in this area for fishing food and medicine gathering for millennia. Articulating a more balanced narrative is desirable and should be regarded as a high priority.

Stabilizing the historic assets that are most at risk should be regarded as a priority regardless of which organization has primary jurisdiction. This should include the M.V. Gladys, buildings and wharf at Taku Landing, the Atlin Powerhouse roof, the historic dredge and the timber dam.

The long-term survival and sustainability of cultural resources in the Atlin area depends on:

- 1. Maintaining a high level of social/cultural relevance for the local community.**
- 2. Ensuring the health/vitality of organizations such as the AHS which are responsible for the stewardship of cultural resources. This MUST include financial resilience.**
- 3. Collaboration and partnership between volunteers and stewardship organizations.**

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Figure 3 – The town of Atlin shortly before the end of the First World War and entering a new period of prosperity associated with tourism, 22 July 1917. BC Archives, A-05515.

Recommended Budgets for Planning Purposes

Ref	Description	Priority	Budget
1	<p>Work with staff from Heritage BC or similar organization to develop a Strategic Plan for the Atlin Historical Society:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define revenue opportunities resulting from tourism, special events, industry partners and commercial leases. • Seek working models from similar communities (e.g., Fernie BC) where heritage conservation has been successfully integrated with tourism to create a vibrant community. • Update AHS website and social media. • Create strategic objectives that ensure financial resilience. 	High	\$30,000
2	<p>Complete deferred maintenance at the M.V. Terahne and improve public access to the vessel. Improve function space to create revenue for AHS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair the exterior decks. • Adjust the cribbing. • Maintain the fire-supression system. • Repair the interior floor coverings. • Improve handrails and public safety. • Refresh interpretation and signage. 	High	\$60,000
3	<p>Conservation of Taku Landing and Railway:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Conservation Plan for the site to guide decision-making and consider Provincial Historic Place designation. • Explore opportunities for partnership with BC Parks and training opportunities for Parks staff in the conservation of built heritage. • Develop waymarking and interpretation of the site. 	High	\$110,000

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4	<p>Make the minimum repairs necessary to rehabilitate the Courthouse in order to improve public access and generate revenue for AHS via multiple commercial rents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Business Case. • Repair greywater and sewer discharge. • Refresh toilet and kitchen facilities. • Install Wi-Fi hub; • Create rental accommodation suitable for café and retail space. • Supplement heating with high-efficiency wood heat. • Seal windows and doors to improve thermal performance. • Refresh painting and decorating. • Install new roofing. 	High	\$200,000
5	<p>Install a new roof over the Powerhouse (turbine shed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make repairs to rafter ends. • Install new metal roofing. 	High	\$15,000
6	<p>Perform Emergency Stabilization of the Gladys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct a temporary cover. • Add cribbing to support the hull. • Strengthen and support the cabin and deck. • Perform a survey and schedule of repairs. 	High	\$12,000
7	<p>Create a Large Objects Conservation Plan for the Atlin Museum collection.</p>	Med	\$12,000
8	<p>Perform trail maintenance, vegetation removal and stabilization work at Dredge and Timber Dam:</p>	Med	\$15,000

NB: Budgets exclude GST.



Figure 4 – Historic timber dam in the landscape surrounding Atlin, September 2019

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Figures 5 and 6 – The remarkable setting of Taku Landing and some of the surviving objects there, September 2019.



Figure 7 – The roof of the Powerhouse, September 2019.

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Figure 8 – The historic dredge near Atlin, September 2019.

Thank you for this opportunity to travel to and spend time in the Atlin area. Please don't hesitate to contact us should you have any questions or concerns.

For Heritageworks Ltd.

Gord Macdonald

Pp. Ben Gourley