

RMOW Alta Lake and Nita Lake Heritage Buildings

Current Status, Assessment and Future

Dated: September 5, 2024

Contributors:

Departments of Facilities and Construction Management (FCM), Resort Operations, Recreation, Climate Action, Village Animation and Events (VA&E), Building, Planning, Parks Planning.

Subject Buildings:

1. Hillman Cabin - West side of Nita Lake, coming to RMOW as part of new development
2. The Point – Upper house beside stairs, main lower building
3. Old School house – Just north of Alta Lake Park Artists house
4. Alta Lake Station – Old cabin in front of Writer’s house

Document Purpose:

Work in progress information document to capture inputs and inform discussion, short- and long-term recommendations, and budgets.

Maintenance Context:

- Normally annual maintenance budgets should be 2-5% of the asset’s value.
- For all buildings, considerable major maintenance has been deferred to the point where high-cost items are now all due or overdue.
- In some cases, significant reinvestment is required to continue to maintain these buildings in their current condition and to protect the asset long term.

Heritage Context:

This document does not yet fully consider any cultural or heritage context.

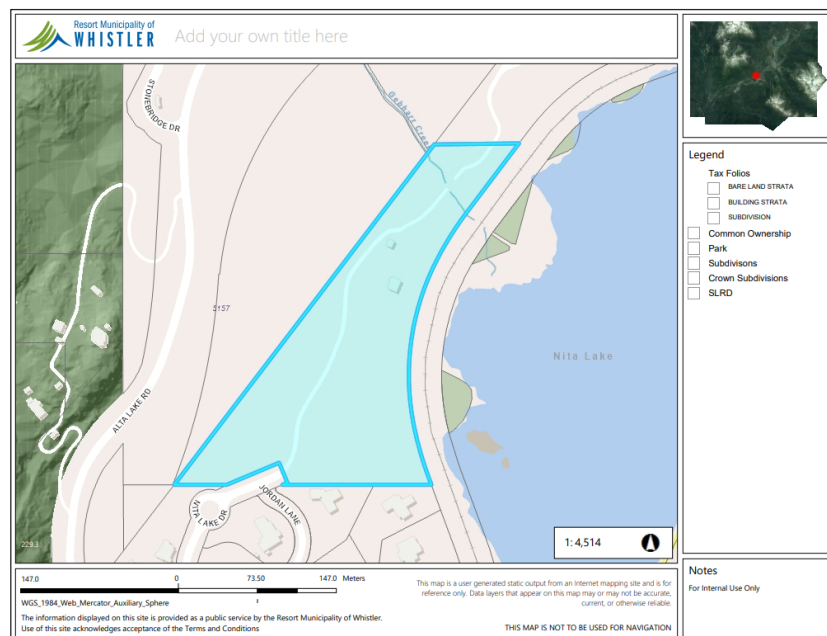
For reference:

- Whistler’s 2018 Cultural Plan: [Whistler’s Cultural Plan | Resort Municipality of Whistler](#)
- OCP Arts, Nature and Heritage: [Arts, Nature and Heritage | Resort Municipality of Whistler](#)

1. Hillman Cabin (aka - Gebhart House and original Toad Hall)

Current Development:

- 5298 Alta Lake rd.
- Empire Club Development Corp, zoned TA17
- 3.84Ha property currently being redeveloped for a mix of market value and employee restricted housing
- RMOW will be assuming ownership of these the Hillman Lodge building
- Development Permit Areas:
 - Schedule J - Protection of Riparian Ecosystem, a small portion on the north end of the property surrounding Gebhart Ck, does not include buildings
 - Schedule O – Commercial Industrial
 - Schedule P - Multi Family Residential, exemption may exist
 - Schedule S – Wildfire Protection, moderate risk, exemption may exist



Developer Obligations re Cabin:

Schedule B part 2 (PDF page 22, document page 18) of 2023 registered LTA Development Agreement:

- Relocate and upgrade building.
- Developer indicates \$100,000 to relocate
- Agreement outlines estimated projected cost at \$250,000 to upgrade:

Part 2 - Cabin Work

1. The cabin as shown on the Key Plan for the TA17 Zone shall be repaired and upgraded such that:
 - (a) it is impervious to weather and structurally sound for all months of the year;
 - (b) the main floor of the cabin may be safely used and occupied between May 1 and – September 30 of each calendar year;
 - (c) The following cabin fixtures will be removed:
 - (i) Fireplace;
 - (ii) Deck;
 - (iii) Asbestos;
 - (iv) Attic;
 - (v) Kitchen, bath, and all plumbing; and
 - (vi) Other unnecessary fixtures as accepted by the General Manager of Climate Action Planning and Development Services;
 - (d) The following cabin improvements will be undertaken:
 - (i) New foundation;
 - (ii) Structural upgrades for seismic Limited to Collar ties, plywood shear walls;
 - (iii) Block access to attic;
 - (iv) New metal roof;
 - (v) New windows;
 - (vi) New front door;
 - (vii) Paint exterior, fire proof paint not required
 - (viii) Basic lighting and plugs sub panel power fed from washroom panel, and
 - (ix) Repair flooring;

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Building Constraints:

- Structure does not meet snow load rating so cannot be occupied in winter without significant upgrade.
- Requires metal roof to shed snow (load) which impacts adjacent public spaces
- Limited power, no water service, no heat
- Building will be received by RMOW with bare stud interior. RMOW to pay for internal upgrades and finishes (walls, floor, lights, ceiling etc.) if to have indoor uses (i.e. community bookings).
- No vehicle access or parking – walk in via Valley Trail only
- Small adjacent neighbourhood population to immediately serve, relevant to other neighbourhoods

Developer's Comments:

Building has serious constraints for future public use. These could be addressed but not without significant costs.

RMOW may wish to reconsider the long-term community value and financial risk of the building. Other scenarios, such as using it as a one-time funding source for older buildings with greater community and resort value and less financial risk, could be more beneficial.

Summarized Staff Opinions:

Based upon Aug 20 site visit and subsequent discussion with representatives from Planning, Building, FCM, VA&E, Resort Ops and Parks Planning.

- Not against retaining the building but only if there is a legitimate longer-term plan and budget to further upgrade it so the interior is usable and annually maintained, otherwise it will be an expensive and underutilized structure.
- Interior finishing scope and costs undetermined, estimated to be in the \$65,000 range.
- An unheated building raises potential for musty smell/mold.
- Location, access challenges (no public parking nearby, one way Valley Trail), limited season of use, limited services and small local population greatly reduce desirability of booking the facility. These factors may not justify expenditure to retain or annually maintain.
- Already have several expensive to maintain older buildings each with a variety of use levels, all requiring a variety of potentially significant reinvestment to protect the asset and/or improve community value/programming opportunities.

Staff Recommendations (consensus):

- Relieve the developer of the current approved obligations.
- Redirect the costs for those obligations (as per above and the agreement) to a more desirable amenity of broader resort community value and use.
- If obligations removed, one option would be to:
 - Include interpretive sign on site.
 - Explore repurposing some of the wood siding, trim etc to park washroom building
 - New purpose build covered shelter at said park, also using materials and character where possible

Another option would be to redirect the financial value to achieve what is set out in the Agreement to a more resort community significant, accessible and usable heritage asset(s) elsewhere and in real need of reinvestment (i.e., Point main building, Fairhurst house etc.).

Development Agreement:

Agreement language:

(f) If the cabin restoration cannot be achieved within in the original scope (“restored so that the RMOW will not need to invest in immediate building maintenance and improvement. It is not the intention to bring the building up to the current Building Code”) and projected cost estimates unreasonably exceeds \$250,000 then the General Manager of Climate Action, Planning and Development Services and the Owner will agree to review covenant requirements to ensure the minimum requirements of the TA17 Zone are met related to this community amenity.



2. The Point aka Cypress Point, Former Hostel Site

History:

<https://whistlermuseum.org/tag/cypress-point/>

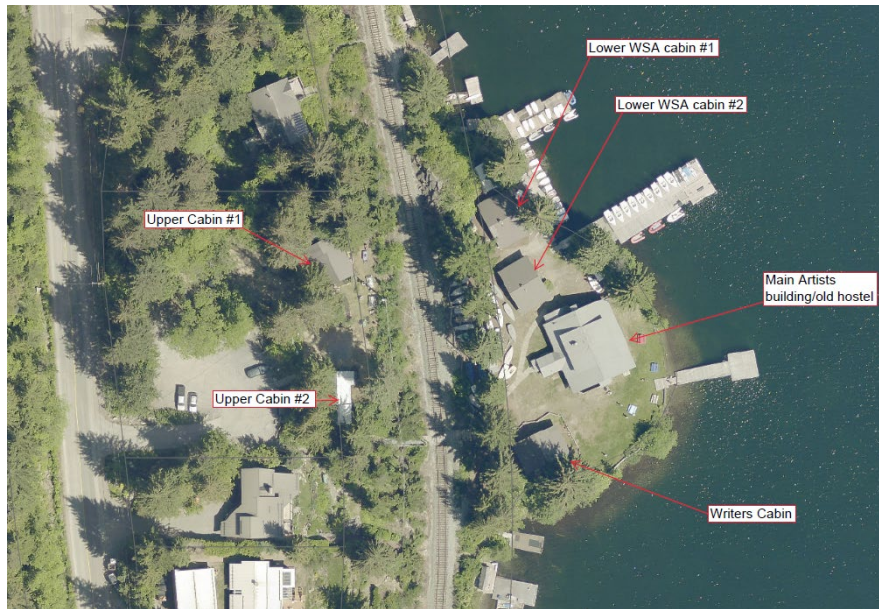
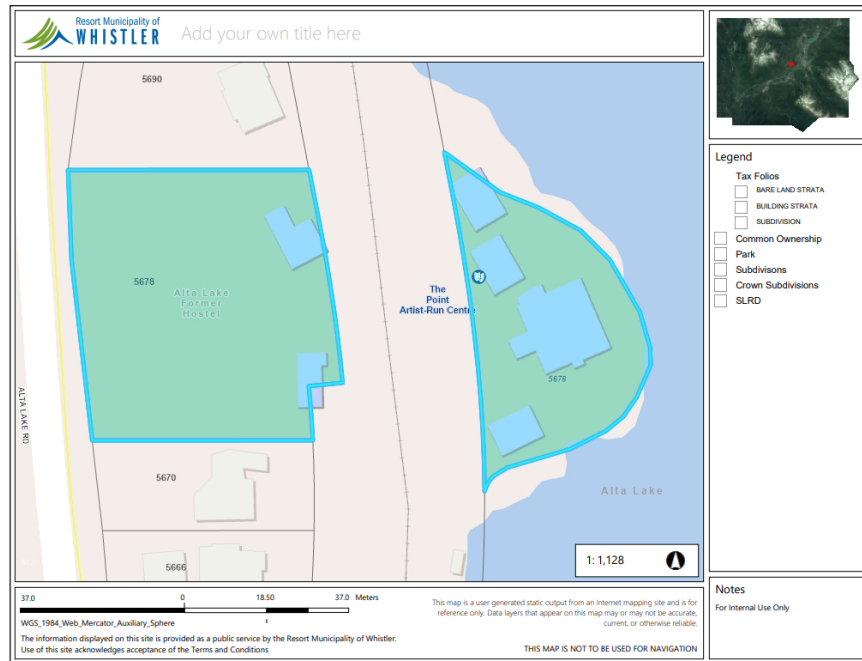
Main building Cypress Lodge

Site Development:

Six buildings on this property. Staff seek a longer-term plan/vision for all buildings.

- 5678 Alta Lake Rd. Former Hostel Site
- RMOW owned, Zoned LR6
- Development Permit Areas:
 - Schedule J - Protection of Riparian Ecosystem, all property below the railway
 - Schedule K – Protection of Sensitive Ecosystem, entire property

- Schedule P - Multi Family Residential, exemption may exist
- Schedule S - Wildfire Protection, high risk, exemption may exist



Upper cabin #2 beside stairs

- Proximate to CN Rail ROW.
- Condition assessment is poor.
- No foundation visible, evidence of building sitting on timber sleepers.
- Currently vacant.
- Setbacks; detached dwelling 7.6m front and rear, 6m between buildings. Variance may be required.



FCM Comments:

Upper cabin #1 (occupied)

- Needs longer term plan. Similar style and quality of construction as the other buildings. Has received a level of maintenance/upkeep.

Upper cabin #2 (unoccupied)

- Poor condition. No longer suitable for occupancy or storage.
- Recommend removal.

- Removal would facilitate rebuild of the stairs to the lower portion of the property along a less steep alignment (stair rebuild is necessary for lifecycle replacement purposes).

Lower Cabins (#1, 2 and Artists/Writer)

- Staff require a longer-term plan for one of the cabins (lower #1, 2). Both are in poor shape and have chronic plumbing freeze ups and leaks.

Main Bldg

- Structural assessment underway given visible structural issues.

Parking Lot

- Opportunity for paving and line marking, expansion, arrangement with neighbouring house, etc.

Ballpark condition assessment:

- The Point Main bldg. 1/5
- Whistler Sailing Association buildings 2/5
- Writers cabin 2/5

Cost Estimate Upgrades (to get to 3/5 to achieve safety and basic functionality):

- The Point Main bldg. \$525,000
- WSA buildings (2) \$150,000 x2
- Writers cabin \$120,000

Building Code Comments:

- Any designated as heritage bldg.?
 - 2 ways to do so
 - Can provide slight relaxation if designated
 - Requires process to get designation
- None meet current snow load requirements. Addressing this may trigger other code compliances which could get expensive (Step Code etc.)

Railway Xing:

- Currently private crossing.
- Achieving full compliance may require a grade separated crossing.
- Achieving partial compliant is possible
 - Main access stairs to lower portion of site are in need of replacement. Could relocate/realign if upper unoccupied cabin removed and provide more gentle access

Booking/Lease/Revenue/VIK Comments:

- The Point Main bldg.
 - Not used year round
 - \$25k revenue/year
 - Value-in-Kind agreement with The Point Artist Centre (janitorial)
 - Achieve goals in Whistler Culture Plan – artist is residence and year-round functional area as outlined in OCP

- WSA buildings
 - License of Occupation \$600/month for both. FCM holds lease, collaboration with Resort Ops (bldgs. and grounds)
 - Use vs bldg. condition creating greater issues for the buildings. Cramped.
- Artist's/Writer's Cabin
 - Utilized by PARC uses to support artist-in-residence programs (aligns with Whistler Cultural Plan)

Environmental Considerations

- RAPR applies only to residential, industrial & commercial development
- If retain existing foundation & footprint (*repair or reconstruction if damage or destruction \geq 75% of value above foundation*) can keep structure, otherwise may be subject to RAPR/SPEA
- RAPR regs may not technically apply but the RMOW to demonstrate leadership by aligning with regulations.
- Riparian & Sensitive Ecosystems DPAs would likely apply.

Planning Considerations

- Require variances
- Likely don't have original Building Permits given age of buildings (predate municipality)

Foundations

- Not sure which buildings have a reasonable foundation
- If not suitable then could lead to major replacement at significant cost

Ideas/Recommendations:

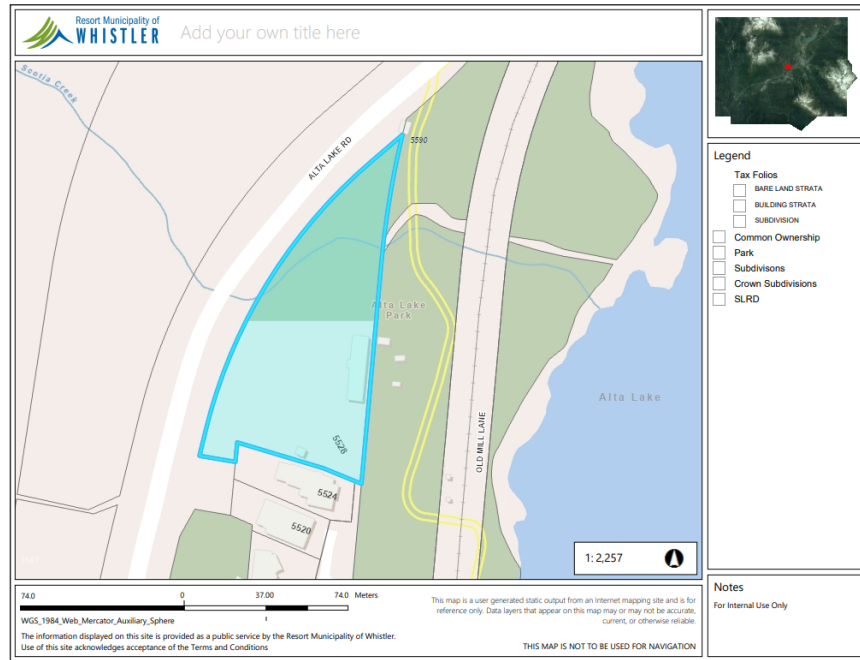
- Vacant building – use for a vocational school reno skill building?
- Cultural Plans and Heritage
- Long term resident housing
- Demo unoccupied upper cabin #2, allows opportunity for access/stairway/parking improvements. Demo will need a Development Permit.
- Retain stain glass window in one of the buildings.
- If demo, consider waste diversion public education opportunity
- Main bldg – complete structural assessment (underway), review opportunities and constraints.

3. Old School House

Site Development:

- 5528 Old Mill Lane
- RMOW owned, zoned LP1
- 0.7 Ha property with old schoolhouse, one small outbuilding, 2 portables, vehicles, equipment and building materials on site.
- Borders onto Alta Lake Park with Valley Trail. Some outbuildings associated with this main building are on the Alta Lake Park property
- Scotia Creek runs through property (may not be accurately located on GIS)

- Access unclear
- Development Permit Areas:
 - Schedule J - Protection of Riparian Ecosystem, a portion of the property following the creek. Buildings not included
 - Schedule K – Protection of Sensitive Ecosystem, entire property
 - Schedule P - Multi Family Residential, exemption may exist
 - Schedule S – Wildfire Protection, high risk, exemption may exist





FCM Comments:

The building is in poor shape. Structural failure of roof. Unoccupied and untidy. Used as storage. The building has washrooms (2 singles), unsure if hooked into water and sanitary but lines are nearby. Could provide public washrooms for Alta Lake Park. Parking and road access considerations for discussion. There is possibly an in-ground diesel/heating oil tank that needs to be removed.

Ballpark condition assessment: 1/5

Cost Estimate Upgrades:

- Not researched
- RMOW has not spent funds on this building in at least the last 5 years.

Brass lid on ground

- Clue to possible in ground heating oil tank

Booking/Lease/Revenue/VIK Comments:

- 2018 Lease Agreement, Resort Operations investigating.

Comments/Observations:

- Impressive property, views of the lake, flat space. High value.
- Three buildings on adjacent land. Two on wheels, could be moved.
- Main building on concrete pad.
- Better candidate for vocational school than former hostel site.
- Access could be a challenge
 - Road access directly from Alta Lake Rd constrained by creek and topography
 - Maybe access from adjacent RMOW property or Old Mill Lane?

Ideas/Recommendations:

- Explore potential community uses
- Explore development potential

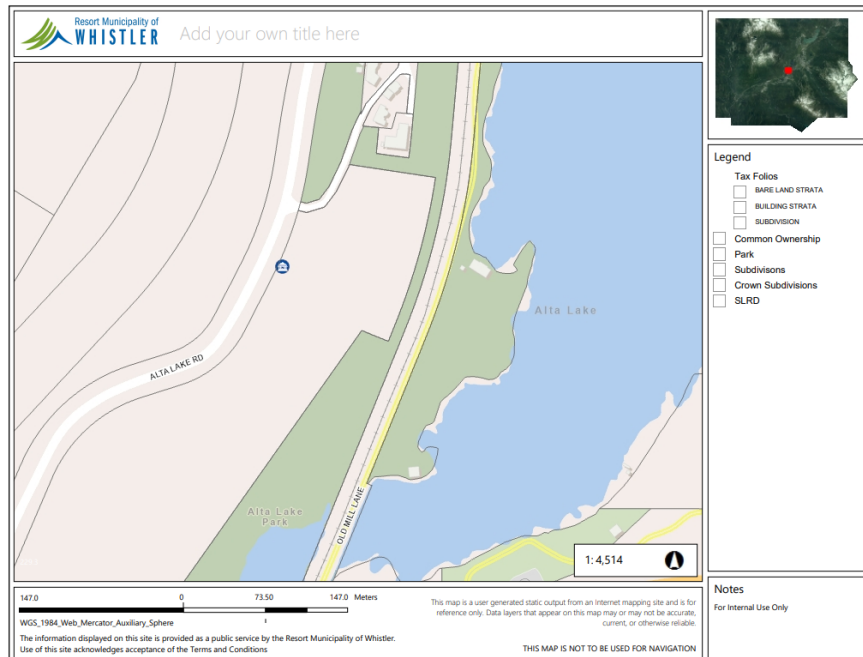
4. Alta Lake Station

Site Development:

Three structures.

- Refer to Legal Plan LMP41222
- RMOW owned, known as “Alta Lake Station” or “Alta Lake Park” and shown as “Park” referenced on above legal plan
- All but one property bisected by CN Rail
- All constrained by lack of vehicle access (service vehicle via Valley Trail)
- Small cabin in front of Artist House (blue door)
 - Poor condition assessment

- No foundation visible, evidence of building sitting on rotten timber sleepers
- Long since vacant and unused
- Artist House (Fairhurst)
 - Concrete foundation.
 - Has seen recent work and in fair shape
 - Bookable space but underutilized.
- Whistler Adaptive Cabin (Kayak)
 - Concrete foundation.
 - Fair or better shape.
 - Leased as watersports storage and staging area by Whistler Adaptive Sports Program.
- Development Permit Areas:
 - Schedule J - Protection of Riparian Ecosystem, all waterfront property including all buildings
 - Schedule K – Protection of Sensitive Ecosystem, entire property
 - Schedule P - Multi Family Residential, exemption may exist
 - Schedule S – Wildfire Protection, high risk, exemption may exist







FCM Comments:

Small cabin (with blue door)

- Unoccupied and unsuitable for occupancy or storage.
- Rodent infested with strong odours.
- Small unconforming washroom inside.
- Recommend pull power back, cap water supply & sanitary, demolish; minor landscaping to tidy area up.
- Removal would create more outdoor programming space

Ballpark condition assessment:

- Small cabin 0/5
- Fairhurst house 3/5
- Kayak house 3/5

Cost Estimate Upgrades:

- Fairhurst house \$105,000
- Kayak house \$293,000

Booking/Lease/Revenue/VIK Comments:

- Fairhurst house
 - Support cultural activities, events (Art on the Lake)
 - Spring cornucopia one month
 - RMOW booking staff hesitant to promote because not sure what long-term future of the building is. Requires a plan.
- Kayak house
 - Whistler Adaptive Sports Program.

Ideas/Recommendations:

- Small cabin (with blue door)
 - Demolish as per above.
 - Consider building a public park washroom?
- Fairhurst
 - Worth keeping long-term
 - Reasonable condition
 - Good but limited community use
 - Currently set up as a house to live in, might be better to make it more “event viable.”
 - Explore opportunities with Events/Booking staff/Typical user groups
 - Potential improvements - artist studio space upstairs (day studio), improve bathroom
- Kayak House
 - Worth keeping long term
 - Reasonable condition
 - Good community use