

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
B.C. BINNING STUDIOS
AND DOROTHY SOMERSET STUDIOS

6373 and 6361 University Boulevard
The University of British Columbia

31 OCTOBER 2017



Left: B.C. Binning Studios (originally Electrical Laboratories)
Right: Dorothy Somerset Studios (originally Mechanical Laboratories)

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NOMENCLATURE

Binning Studios / M-17 / Electrical Laboratories

The B.C. Binning Studios building was originally known as the Electrical Laboratories, and has also been known as Hut M-17. For ease, this report will refer the building as the Binning Studios.

Somerset Studios / M-18 / Mechanical Laboratories

The Dorothy Somerset Studios building was originally known as the Mechanical Laboratories, and has also been known as Hut M-18. It is located alongside the Binning Studios, uphill of that building. For ease, this report will refer the building as the Somerset Studios.



*Mining Laboratories under construction with Power House in foreground also under construction, c. 1924
(Courtesy of UBC Archives UBC 1.1/1800)*

BRIEF HISTORY and CHRONOLOGY

STILL STANDING

A brief history of the Binning Studios and Somerset Studios

Visitors to the University of British Columbia (UBC) Point Grey campus are mostly aware of the many large, tall buildings constructed in the last couple decades. However, amid all this new work is a cluster of older, low-rise buildings of wood frame clad with stucco. Near the eastern side of the cluster, on University Boulevard near the intersection of West Mall, are two long, low buildings of simple but functional construction painted in two tones of green with white

trim. These are the Binning and Somerset Studios, occupied by the Department of Art History, Visual Art, and Theory and the Department of Theatre, Film, and Creative Writing, to provide art studios, rehearsal spaces, classrooms, and a small theatre.

Although UBC had been legislated in 1908 and construction of the campus began four years later, university life did not move to the campus until 1925 after ten years of teaching in makeshift facilities in Vancouver and following the construction of this cluster of semi-permanent classrooms, laboratories, and offices on Point Grey, including the Mechanical and Electrical Laboratories, which became the Binning and Somerset Studios. These Studios help represent the origins of the Point Grey campus of The University of British Columbia.

Building Point Grey Campus

UBC came into the world slowly. Plans to build a university were first suggested in the 1870s, but were hampered for several decades by a shortage of funds, low demand from a small segment of a small settler population, weak government commitment, and, above all, competition between university supporters on Vancouver Island and in the Lower Mainland. The first serious attempt to create a provincial university in 1891 fell apart due to regional rivalry. Yet a small but influential group of BC residents continued to press for a provincial university resembling the state-controlled, non-religious, American institutions that embraced science and professional education in agriculture, engineering, medicine, and other practical areas of material and economic significance. Several small liberal arts colleges opened in Victoria, Vancouver, and New Westminster during the 1890s to satisfy the increasing demand for higher education, but the decision by Vancouver and then Victoria High School to affiliate with McGill University in Montreal provided an indirect path toward the provincial university. As the BC economy prospered in the early 1900s and Premier Richard McBride introduced party discipline to strengthen his grip on power, the provincial government and Montreal's McGill University created a local college in Vancouver ("McGill BC") to provide several years instruction in Classics, literature, modern languages, science, and engineering. The provincial university, legislated into existence in 1908, adopted much of the same curriculum.

Choosing a location for the new university presented an additional hurdle, as sectionalism had scuttled earlier plans. The committee appointed to review various possible sites quickly recommended a location near the economic, industrial, and population centre of the province (Vancouver) but which had room for agricultural research: Point Grey. The site was also on the ancestral home of the Musqueam First Nation who had lived on the Fraser delta for perhaps ten thousand years, according to the archaeological record, and at their Musqueam village at present-day Marpole for some four thousand years. The land provided resources for hunting, fishing, trapping, and plant-gathering, while the high lands and bluffs jutting into the ocean provided look-out posts and defensive barricades. Creeks, ponds, and rocks all had cultural, spiritual, and educational significance to the Musqueam, but by the time UBC's site had been chosen, the original people had largely been pushed off their land and onto reserves to make way for the settler society.

With UBC's site chosen, plans to build a grand, imperial university proceeded. The university's first President, Frank Wesbrook, proposed a "Cambridge on the Pacific" and received assurances

of generous government support. Work began on the permanent library and science buildings, but a sharp economic decline in 1913 followed by the outbreak of war in Europe the following year halted development. UBC instead opened in 1915 in shabby, wood-framed buildings next to the Vancouver General Hospital, where McGill BC had run its classes. For eight years the university languished in these poor conditions as student numbers outgrew the accommodation. Finally, in 1923, as the post-war economy improved, students and concerned BC residents were able to convince a new provincial government to build the promised campus on Point Grey. Hastily in 1924–25, the government finished the stone-faced library and science buildings, and built a cluster of semi-permanent, wood-framed classrooms and academic offices, laboratories, meeting rooms, a coal-fired steam generation plant, an auditorium, and administrative offices. Among them were two laboratories for the Department of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering and one for the Department of Mining and Metallurgy. The mechanical and electrical laboratories, vital to UBC's important programs in engineering, were ready for students in the fall of 1925 when the Point Grey campus finally welcomed students.

Mechanical Laboratories Building (now the Somerset Studios)

The Mechanical Laboratories comprised a large laboratory, three lecture rooms, a draughting room, a calorimetry room, a storage room and a machine shop. The laboratory accommodated a Corliss engine, a two-stage air-compressor, and a new National gas engine, which was equipped with the necessary apparatus for carrying out complete tests. In addition, two oil engines were available for testing purposes, along with a 50 hp. Diesel Engine and Fronde Brake, a De Laval steam Turbine with condenser, a triple expansion marine engine, a carbon dioxide refrigerating machine, several oil engines, and a gas engine. The Power House with its different types of boilers were available for conducting complete boiler tests. A 250 kilowatt AC generator driven by a high speed compound engine and various steam pumps in the Power House were available for testing purposes. The calorimetry room contained a Junker's gas calorimeter for the complete analysis of fuels and gas. In addition, the building held a large amount of equipment for experimental work in the mechanics of machines, and an excellent machine shop equipped with lathes and other up-to-date machine tools.

Electrical Laboratories Building (now the Binning Studios)

The smaller of the two laboratory buildings held junior and senior electrical engineering laboratories, a high tension testing laboratory, and rooms for research, photometry, and meter-standardizing. The senior laboratory contained modern equipment, including three phase series and shunt commutator motors, a repulsion motor of the Deri brush shifting type, rotary converters, synchronous motors, and direct current machines of the series, shunt, and compound types. There was also a Hunt Cascade Induction motor, an alternator, and a Kapp Vibrator. A Duddell oscillograph and a Gall alternating current potentiometer had also been installed. The junior laboratory was furnished with all the equipment necessary in preparing for the senior course.

The Engineering Huts Repurposed

For some fifty years the Mechanical and Electrical Laboratories buildings provided hands-on learning experiences for engineering students. In the late 1940s or early 1950s, the Electrical Laboratories building acquired a two-story addition on the north end that provided additional office and classroom space. In 1951 the Department of Electrical Engineering separated administratively from Mechanical Engineering to form a distinctive department and in 1964, having grown into a large and sophisticated teaching and research unit, Electrical Engineering moved into a new building as campus facilities expanded. Mechanical Engineering moved into the Electrical Laboratories building until the Department also acquired new quarters in 1971 (the “Rusty Hut”) and 1976 (the “CEME Building”) and began to transfer its laboratories into those new buildings. Mining and Metallurgy also moved to new quarters in 1968, but maintained laboratories in its original building on the West Mall side of the Engineering Laboratories into the 1980s (the building is now demolished).

After the engineering departments vacated their old student laboratories, the buildings were used for various purposes including artistic production, teaching, administration, construction, and storage—sometimes all at the same time. UBC’s Office of Physical Plant used several upstairs rooms of the Mechanical Laboratories building for storage, holding onto these rooms until the mid-1990s. Continuing Education, whose programs in English language instruction grew considerably in the early 1980s, moved its Language Institute into both laboratories buildings in the mid-1980s, using various rooms for teaching and administration. The Language Institute vacated to other quarters in 1993. The Department of Fine Arts established a sculpture studio and workshop for a new faculty member about 1980, and slowly expanded its claim on the buildings. The Department of Theatre also moved into the buildings during the 1980s, and expanded its presence. By the 1990s, the School of Music was also using the buildings for music practice and for storing sets used in its opera productions.

UBC in the early 1990s entered a new period of growth after nearly two decades of stifling economic conditions and government policies of restraint. UBC’s new President appointed in 1986 was intent on raising the university’s profile, particularly as a research and graduate studies institution but also as a competitive undergraduate school. This vision was not entirely new, but without generous government funding UBC’s administration turned to private fund raising and commercial activities to finance capital projects. By the early 1990s, sufficient money had been raised to build new infrastructure and to replace some of the older and temporary buildings currently in use. In particular, UBC administrators wanted to replace dozens of wood and tarpaper huts moved to UBC in the late 1940s from army camps across the province. These rudimentary but functional buildings had successfully accommodated masses of returning veterans and had continued to accommodate the “baby boom” generation of the late 1960s, but their time had come. Many huts came down in the 1990s. The Faculty of Arts, which hosted the Departments of Theatre, Music, and Fine Arts, recommended in its 1995 Master Plan that the Mechanical and Electrical Laboratories buildings they were reusing should also be immediately replaced with better studio facilities. The later addition to the Electrical Laboratories was no longer usable (owing to leaking steam pipes) and the buildings were generally considered unsafe. However, instead of demolition, the buildings became studio spaces for two of UBC’s Fine Arts departments.

Fine Arts Needing Space

For many years UBC had never really provided good studio facilities for its Fine Arts programs. Fine Arts education had been a post-Second World War development, when then-President Norman MacKenzie supported expansion of the university at a time of soaring enrollment and somewhat more generous government financing. MacKenzie, a member of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, additionally supported artistic and cultural practices as an aspect of Canadian nationalism. With encouragement from local architects, UBC launched its Department of Architecture in 1949 and hired staff, including acclaimed modernist painter B.C. Binning who was teaching at the Vancouver School of Art. Binning also began teaching UBC's first visual art classes for undergraduate credit and helped establish an art gallery in the basement of the library. After nearly a decade of internal lobbying and successful teaching, UBC launched a formal Department of Fine Arts in 1958 housed in the library basement and the recently completed Buchanan Building, with Binning as Head. A few years later the Department moved into the new Lasserre Building, which also housed the Department of Architecture.

Although some of the courses in the Department of Fine Arts included practice in drawing, the studio courses for credit were only offered to students in the College (then Faculty) of Education, which had its own studio space; Fine Arts initially only awarded art history degrees. In 1971, however, Senate approved a Bachelor of Fine Arts program whose students would need studio space; students used army huts on the south-west corner of West Mall where the original Frederic Wood Theatre once stood. New faculty also needed studio and workshop space, and found some in the former Mechanical Laboratories building. When the Department launched its Master of Fine Arts program in 1982, it obtained use of studio space in the old Armoury until it was demolished in 1994. MFA students moved to somewhat dilapidated old buildings on Stores Road some distance to the east, named the B.C. Binning MFA Studios. Faculty also needed additional studio space, and moved into the Old Firehall in 1984, close to the Mechanical and Electrical Laboratories buildings.

UBC's Department of Theatre had a similar history in regard to studio space. Amateur (student) theatre had a long and proud history at UBC many years before a formal Department of Theatre had been established, for the most part performing in the original campus auditorium. UBC's academic theatre program can be traced back to Dorothy Somerset's appointment in the Department of Extension in 1938 to oversee drama programs. She soon created the UBC Summer School of Theatre, expanding it to the Summer School of the Arts in 1946. Somerset, a member of the English Department after 1946, became the Head of the Department of Theatre when it opened in 1959. She established UBC's (and, for that matter, Vancouver's) first professional theatre in 1951 (a converted army hut formerly used as the Totem Coffee Bar) and lobbied successfully for a proper performance venue, the current Frederic Wood Theatre (1963), located in a new Fine Arts precinct on campus. In 1967, a smaller studio theatre was attached for student workshops, and named in Somerset's honour. However, few courses required additional studio space. The Master of Fine Arts degree in Theatre, launched in 1965, had options in the direction and production of plays, and design of scenery and costumes, both accommodated with the resources of the Frederic Wood Theatre and Dorothy Somerset Studio.

Matters changed in 1979 when the UBC Senate finally approved a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Theatre, with options in acting and design/technical and a very limited enrollment. Enrollment in these options was small (total BFA degrees excluding music hovered around two dozen in 1984, while MFA degrees awarded by the university (including Creative Writing) was fewer than a dozen), but the Department did not see its mission as providing professional training. Nonetheless, UBC's theatre graduates were moving into important professional roles on and behind the stage or in the film industry, while students began filling the acting roles in Frederic Wood productions formerly filled by professional actors. Students by the late 1980s began to need practice space, and found it in the old engineering laboratory buildings. At the same time, the Department began hiring faculty with professional experience as actors, directors, artistic directors, or designers.

Growth of Fine Arts

Although the Department of Fine Arts and the Department of Theatre had lived within existing space for several decades, they would soon need more as demand for their program began to rise. Canada's "art industries" had grown since the 1970s, while the post-industrial service economy of British Columbia's urban centres in the 1980s and into the 1990s (especially the Lower Mainland) had more room for artists in new art-based industries, including architecture, theatre, film-making, visual art, musical theatre, and, in the new millennium, digital media such as web-design. UBC began to encourage the practical aspects of its programs and jobs for graduates, and to provide an increasing number of work experience and co-op programs with work terms; fine arts students became eligible for internships and even co-op placements. Administrative mergers at UBC in 1994 created the new Department of Theatre, Film, and Creative Writing that provided operational efficiencies, but also fed into the local and rapidly growing film and television industries through courses in screen writing, acting, and film production.

Although some of the demand for education in Fine Arts reflected career or further education opportunities for graduates, some reflected growth at UBC more generally and the increasing numbers of students who pursued fine art studies with no intention or expectation of becoming a professional artist. Although compelled to pay higher fees, international students also enrolled in the Fine Arts programs (particularly in the visual arts), adding to the Department's international flavour that had been growing since the 1970s and reflecting the growing cosmopolitan nature of the Vancouver region. UBC administrators enthusiastically promoted their commitment to the fine and performing arts in a special 1990 President's Report, and prepared to build a new, multi-million dollar Fine Arts centre financed in part through private-sector fundraising. The School of Music also appointed a new Chair of Opera and Voice in 1995, who launched the UBC Opera Ensemble which grew from seven members to nearly one hundred two decades later. As another measure of growth, Bachelor of Fine Art degrees awarded by UBC (not including music) nearly doubled between 1989 and 2008 (from thirty-one to fifty-six) while Master of Fine Art degrees leapt from two in 1989 to thirty-seven in 2008. Total enrollment numbers were much higher and showed a similar rise.

Growth in the fine and performing arts departments required additional space, particularly in

the studio aspects of the fields. The Chan Centre for the Performing Arts opened in 1997 as part of the expansion in fine arts facilities, particularly for music, but included the new Telus Studio Theatre which took over from the Dorothy Somerset Studio, leaving it to become a costume room. Unfortunately, the new Creative Arts Centre anticipated in 1990 did not materialize, and by 1999, with fine arts departments desperate for new studio space to meet growing demand, the university began to consider rehabilitation of several older buildings on the demolition list—the Old Auditorium (primarily for the opera program) and the old Mechanical and Electrical Laboratories buildings already in use by Theatre, Fine Arts, and Music.

UBC Renew

As the university faced numerous claims on its capital budget, mounting costs for deferred maintenance, and concern for heritage values and the environmental impact of new construction, UBC began a series of refurbishments to old buildings rather than building new that became a partnership with the provincial government in 2003 entitled “UBC Renew”. One of the first projects was a thorough renewal of the Electrical and Mechanical Laboratories buildings to create classroom, studio, and performance space for students in the Department of Art History, Visual Art, and Theory (the re-named Department of Fine Arts) and the Department of Theatre, Film, and Creative Writing. (The School of Music moved out to facilities elsewhere.) Both were named after the founders of the respective Departments, B.C. Binning and Dorothy Somerset.

The renovated art studios, small performance stages, and workshops were soon put to good use by students and faculty when the new facilities opened in 2005. The old studios across the road in the old army huts carried on for several more years until 2011, when construction began on the new “Ponderosa Housing Hub” of student residences and support services (which also included some art studios). Soon after, a much-welcomed addition to the visual arts arrived in early 2012 when UBC alumnus Michael Audain, through his family foundation, donated \$5 million for a new art centre to be located across the road from the Binning and Somerset Studios. The Audain Art Centre, opened in the fall of 2013, provided studio and flexible work space for students and a gallery for public exhibitions, contributing to the new mixed-use student housing development nearby. In particular, the new Centre provided private studio space for MFA students who finally left their “deteriorating space” on Stores Road. The Binning and Somerset Studios had become part of a new fine arts precinct on the UBC campus that drew together many students and faculty formerly located some distance from each other.



Dorothy Somerset Studios
 Left: Painting Studio, Second Floor
 Right: Rehabilitated roof structure

CHRONOLOGY

BUILDINGS

1925: Construction completed of the two buildings as laboratory space designed for Electrical and Mechanical Engineering. (Mining Engineering occupied a third building next to Electrical Laboratories Building, and is now the site of the Jack Bell Building for the School of Social Work.) All three buildings were part of the Semi-permanent Building cluster, designed by Department of Public Works in 1923. Historical photographs show the Mining Laboratories were built first; a short while later the Electrical and Mechanical Laboratories were constructed. All buildings were ready for fall classes in 1925.

The Electrical Laboratories Building (Binning Studios) was likely initially constructed with provision for future expansion to the south, as noted on the 1923 Public Works drawings.

The Mechanical Laboratories Building (Somerset Studios) was likely initially constructed with a higher roof than what was shown in the 1923 Public Works drawings, and with a second tier of windows not in the original specifications. Photos of the building all show the higher roof – the current roof height.

First year of classes provided at UBC's Point Grey campus, including the use of the Laboratories buildings.

1940s: Although not old army huts, the Electrical Laboratories Building is given the building name Hut M-17, while the Mechanical Laboratories Building is named Hut M-18. This nomenclature obscured the buildings' history as part of the original Public Works semi-permanent campus built west of Main Mall for the opening of the Point Grey campus for classes in 1925.

Electrical Laboratories Building receives a 2-storey addition on its north end.

1964: Electrical Engineering vacates Electrical Laboratories Building (Binning Studios) for the MacLeod Building.

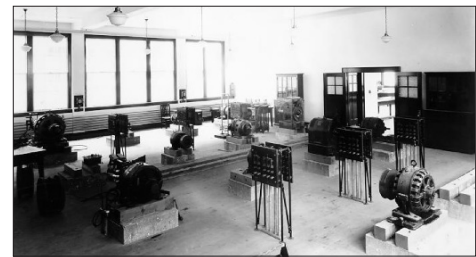
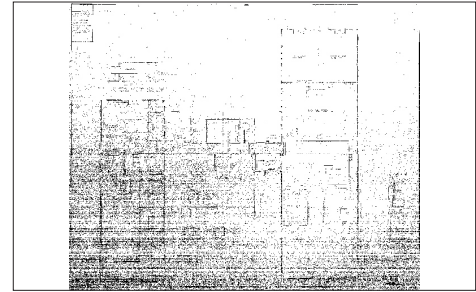
1972/6: Mechanical Engineering vacates Mechanical Laboratories Building (Somerset Studios) for new buildings ("Rusty Hut"/CEME).

1980s: The old Laboratories Buildings begin to be used as classrooms through the 1980s and 1990s by various units, particularly Continuing Studies for language classes, but also the Faculty of Education and others. The Departments of Fine Arts and Theatre begin to use these buildings for studios.

2000: Mechanical Laboratories Building (Somerset Studios) is the first building rehabilitated under what became the "UBC Renew" program. Repurposed as drama rehearsal studios, painting studios, and arts workshop.

2005: Electrical Laboratories Building (Binning Studios) rehabilitated under the "UBC Renew" initiative for use by Fine Arts program.

2007: The Binning and Somerset Studios are officially opened after their rehabilitations.





Top:
B.C. Binning, 1959 (UBC 5.1/187)

Bottom:
Dorothy Somerset, 1965 (UBC 20.1/19)

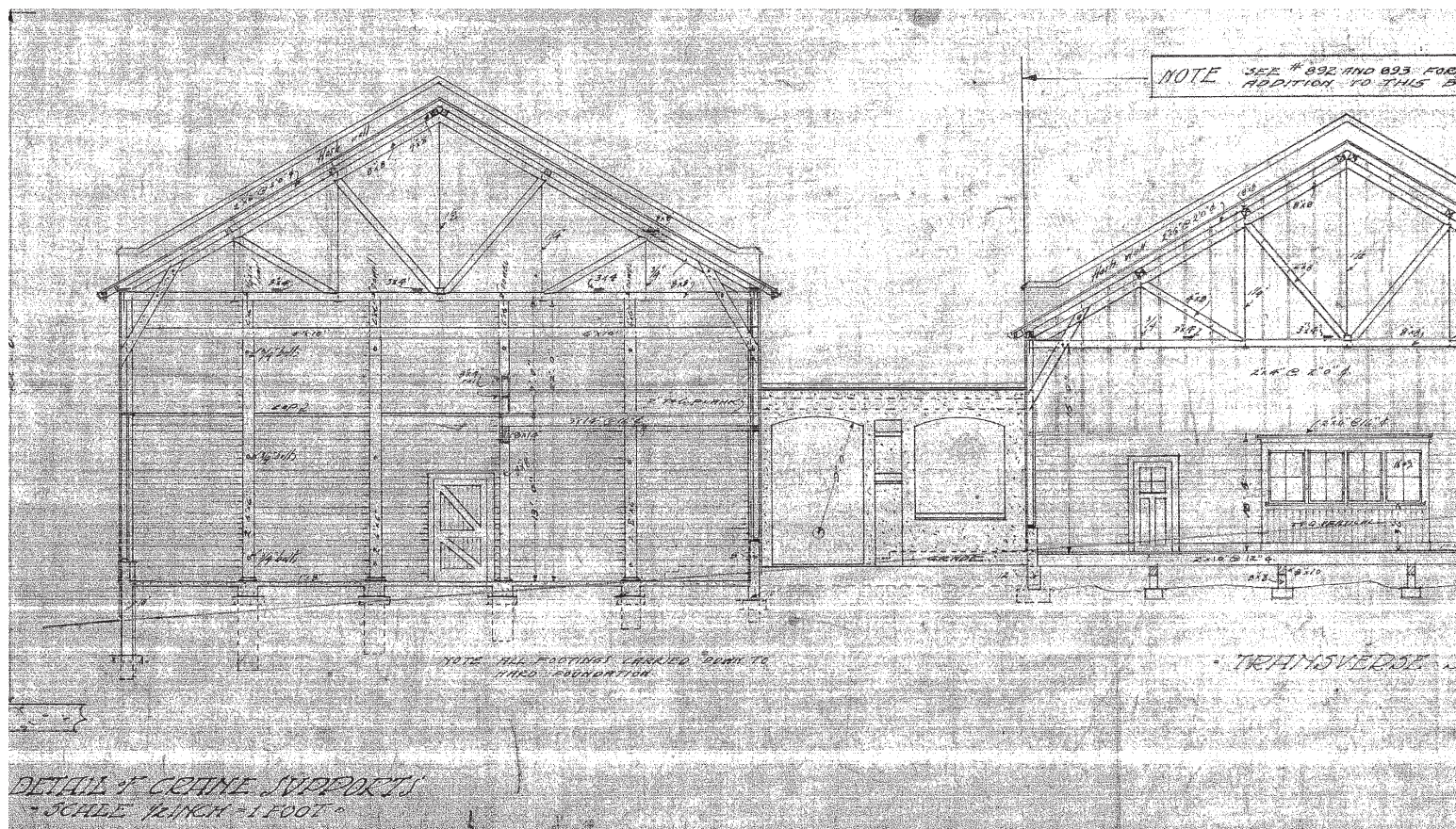
B.C. BINNING, DOROTHY SOMERSET AND THE DEPARTMENTS OF FINE ARTS AND THEATRE AT UBC

- 1937: Dorothy Somerset hired as first permanent staff member of the UBC Department of Extension to supervise drama courses.
- 1938: Somerset launches UBC's first Summer School of Theatre (Dept. of Extension).
- 1946: Summer School of Theatre expands to become Summer School of the Arts.
- 1949: B.C. Binning arrives at UBC to teach in the Department of Architecture (Faculty of Applied Science) and also begins to teach classes in art and art history; UBC establishes an art gallery in the basement of Main Library.
- 1951: Somerset oversees the conversion of the Totem Coffee Bar (Totem Snack Bar) into the university's first professional theatre.
- 1958: Senate approves a Department of Theatre, with Somerset as Head.
- 1958: Binning helps establish the Dept. of Fine Arts (Faculty of Arts), and becomes first Head. The Department is housed initially in basement of Main Library, and subsequently in the Buchanan Building. Studio courses only offered to Education students; art studios located in WWII army huts and then basement of the Scarfe (Education) Building (1962).
- 1962: Lasserre Building opens, houses Dep't. of Fine Arts.
- 1963: New Frederic Wood Theatre opens, after years of campaigning by Somerset and supporters.
- 1965: MFA offered by the Department of Theatre
- 1967: Theatre studio space added to the back of the Frederic Wood Theatre and named "Dorothy Somerset Studio".
Two studio courses in Fine Arts by 1970 (drawing and printmaking, which uses the Faculty of Education printmaking hut).
- 1971: Dept. of Fine Arts introduces the BFA degree, with studio courses taught in army huts on West Mall.
- 1982: Dept. of Fine Arts introduces MFA program; the Department gets partial use of the upstairs of the old Armoury until its demolition in 1994 for the Tsing Tao Building; MFA studios move to old huts further away on 6363 Stores Road.
- 1996: Most huts on West Mall demolished, but Huts M-21 and M-22 saved and used as Fine Arts studios.
- 1997: Dorothy Somerset Studio at back of Frederic Wood Theatre is closed; studio productions moved to the new BC Tel Studio in the Chan Centre; new English Language Institute (ELI) building occupied by Continuing Studies.
- 2000: Move into rehabilitated Mechanical Laboratories Building (M-18) for use as drama rehearsal studios, painting studios, and arts workshop.
- 2001: Dept. of Fine Arts renamed the Department of Art History, Visual Art, and Theory.
- 2007: Electrical Laboratories Building (M-17) rehabilitated for use by Fine Arts program. The two refurbished laboratory buildings officially reopen as the B.C. Binning and Dorothy Somerset Studios.
- 2013: The new Audain Art Centre provides MFA studios, flexible work space, and a public gallery.

Applied Science
Laboratories



Aerial view of UBC Campus, c.1950 (UBC 1.1/11619)



Mining Laboratories (now demolished)

Electrical Laboratories
(now Binning Studios)

Public Works sectional drawing of Laboratories buildings, 1923 (Courtesy of UBC)

Mechanical Laboratories
(now Dorothy Somerset Studios)

North 2-storey addition
constructed in the 1940s

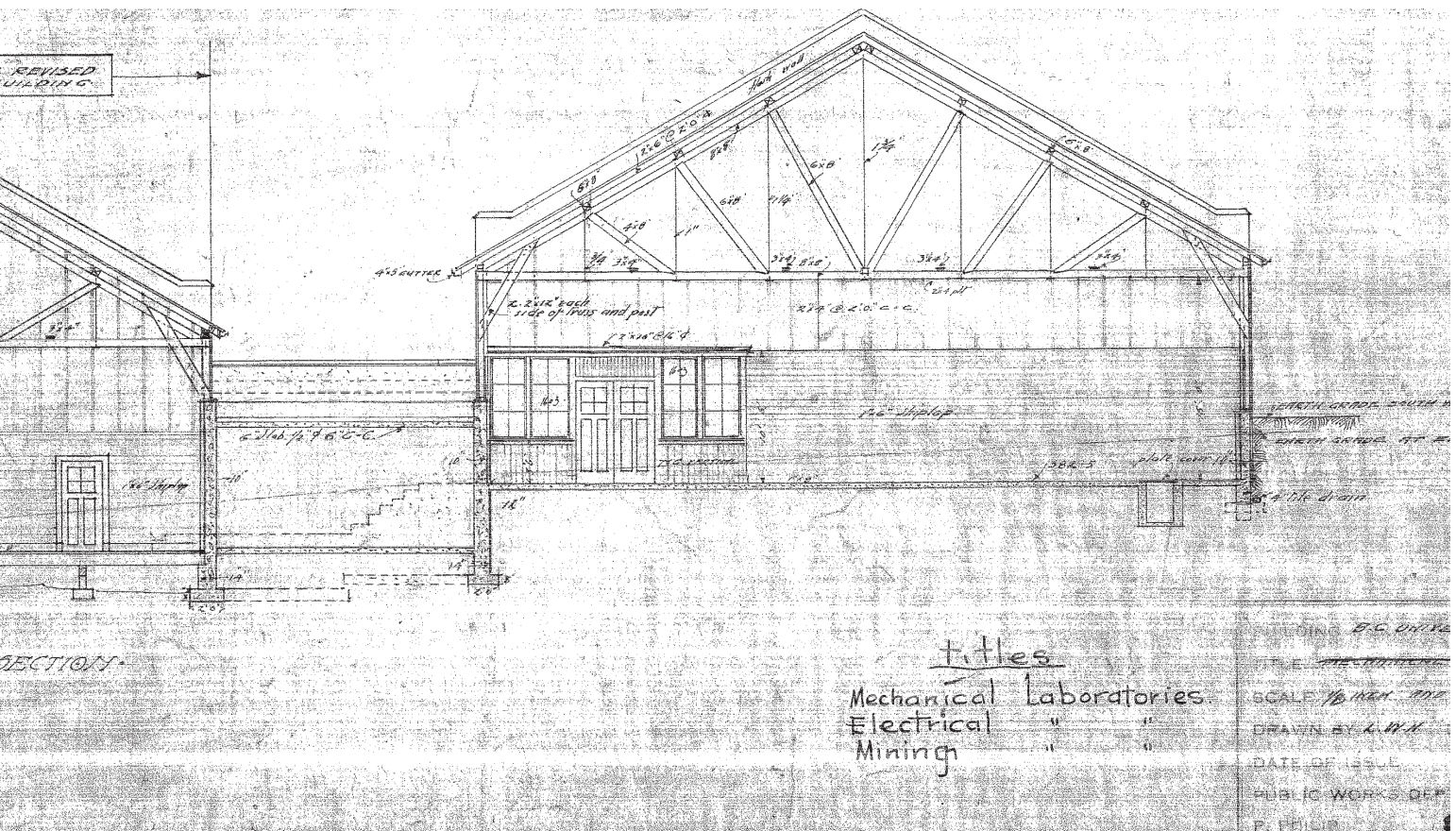
Old Fire Hall

Electrical Laboratories
(now B.C. Binning Studios)

Mining Laboratories
(now demolished)



Aerial view of the UBC Campus, 1950
(Courtesy of UBC Archives UBC 1.1/11553-6)



Mechanical Laboratories
(now Somerset Studios)



*B.C. Binning Studios on the left; Dorothy Somerset Studios on the right;
(1960s additions to the Power House beyond)*

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

B.C. BINNING STUDIOS AND DOROTHY SOMERSET STUDIOS

DESCRIPTION

The B.C. Binning and Dorothy Somerset Studios are the two simple gable-roofed buildings on the north side of University Boulevard between Main and West Malls on the Point Grey Campus of The University of British Columbia. The two buildings are situated between the newer Henry Angus Building on Main Mall, and the Jack Bell School of Social Work on West Mall.

VALUES

As two of the very earliest buildings on campus, the B.C. Binning and Dorothy Somerset Studios are of historical value in their siting, their role in the early history of the campus, and their

more recent history of repurposing. The buildings are also of cultural and social value as environments for the operation of large-scale equipment and, more recently, as places for the production of large-scale visual art and the development of performance works.

The Studios are a significant physical component of the early campus, featured in early photographic imagery, and key to the university's historical identity. Designed and built in two years, the buildings are valuable as examples of standard work done in the 1920s by the province's Department of Public Works, the branch of the civil service charged with building infrastructure throughout the province. Like the other, physically similar semi-permanent buildings that survive today, the Studios' economy of form, materials, and detailing convey the modest scope of the earliest campus, and the financial circumstances surrounding the university's beginnings. The Public Works buildings provide evidence of the university as, fundamentally, an initiative of the province constrained by the provincial budget and motivated by the urgency to make educational space available for faculty and students in time for classes in the fall of 1925.

The provisional nature of the buildings (being part of the semi-permanent building cluster) is an important example of the ad-hoc development of the early campus as funds and resources could be obtained – a practice most famously exemplified by the later repurposing of army huts for use as classrooms, offices, and laboratories in the 1940s. That the buildings were repurposed following the relocation of the engineering laboratories to new facilities in the 1970s indicates both the institutional history of “making-do” with existing infrastructure as the campus grew, and also the dramatic growth of the number of students in the engineering programs and of the student population more generally since 1925, particularly during the 1960s.

The Studios are of particular value for their history of repurposed use, and their physical malleability to accommodate their new uses, reflecting the university culture of the late 20th Century that recognized the potential value of existing building stock. The studios were among the earliest sustainable physical infrastructure upgrades under the university's UBC Renew program.

The studios are also of cultural and social value for providing over the past century intensively-used, cooperative, and student-centred creative and social learning-space, and for being the subject of the earliest sustainable physical upgrades under the university's UBC Renew program.

Because of their names, the two buildings hold considerable symbolic value as they honour two pioneers of fine arts at UBC: B.C. Binning in visual arts and architecture; Dorothy Somerset in theatre arts.

The Binning and Somerset Studios are valuable as a physical record of the campus as it was first built. These early buildings represent a time when the university was an undertaking strictly of the provincial government, financed by the people of BC for the people of BC. The simply-planned and detailed durable wood frame and truss constructions have provided serviceable, economical, and malleable space at the university for almost 100 years. The later, grander constructions around them only serve to underscore the value of the Studios as modest versatile buildings with unique attributes repurposed to suit the changing needs of the university.

CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS**Site**

- Spatial arrangement of neighbouring Studio buildings, and spatial relationship with the Semi-permanent building cluster
- Address on University Boulevard
- Physical connection across shared outdoor corridor

B.C. Binning Studios

Intangible:

- Present and past names of the building
- Reference to it being part of the Semi-permanent building cluster
- History of creative collaborations

Tangible:

- Wood frame construction, wood truss roof structure
- Gable form (1925 building with south extension only)
- Visible aspects of the 2005 upgrade
- Stucco cladding
- Original wood windows and doors
- Remnants of original interior spaces and finishes, original trim
- Naturally-lit classrooms and offices

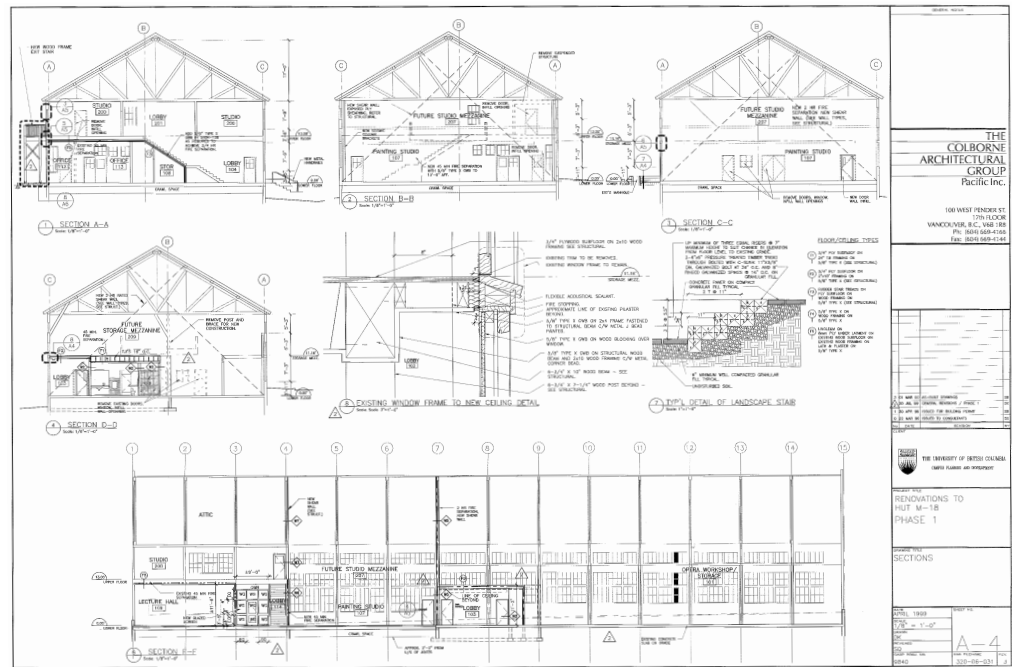
Dorothy Somerset Studios

Intangible:

- Present and past names of the building
- Reference to it being part of the Semi-permanent Building cluster
- History of creative collaborations
- Unprogrammed social events for Theatre Department students in Second Floor Lounge

Tangible:

- Wood frame construction, exposed wood roof truss structure
- Visible structural members that are part of the 2000 upgrade
- Gable form (1925 building with south extension only)
- Stucco cladding
- Original wood windows and doors
- Remnants of original interior spaces and finishes, original trim
- Naturally-lit classrooms and offices



Top: Binning: hallway with new structural reinforcements
Middle: Binning: new student lounge with old roof truss members
Bottom: Binning: hallway with original exterior doors

Right: Somerset: Drawings for rehabilitation, 2000
(Courtesy of UBC and The Colborne Architectural Group)

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231 CARRALL STREET, VANCOUVER, B.C., CANADA V6B 2J2 TELEPHONE: 604-687-1594 www.bwarc.ca

Partners: Sandra M. Moore, Architect AIBC
James D. Burton, Architect AIBC

and

Eric Damer, Historian