

[REDACTED]
Courtenay, B.C., V9N 7K7
22nd June, 2023

Dear Sir:

I learned recently that the house at 276 Sandwick Road, commonly called Sandwick Manor, may be in danger of demolition. I am writing to encourage you in your position as mayor to oppose such an assault on Courtenay's cultural heritage.

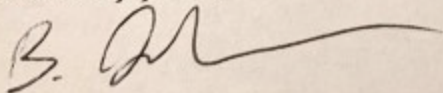
The house is an important example of Edwardian architecture—the only house of its age on the east side of the Courtenay River—but its history relates it to events fifty years prior to its construction. Its original owner, farmer and storekeeper Eric Duncan, was a member of one of the first pioneer families, his uncle William Duncan having come among the earliest British settlers in 1862. Eric and his brother (another William Duncan, four times mayor of Courtenay) were prominent members of the local community until their deaths in the 1940s. Eric became the valley's first major historian with the publication in 1934 of *Fifty-Seven Years in the Comox Valley*, a reprint of which is still sold in the Courtenay Museum. His house is the only building left to commemorate his family's legacy.

Further, as noted by Victoria writer Valerie Green in her 2004 book *If More Walls Could Talk: Vancouver Island's Houses from the Past*, Sandwick Manor is associated with the pioneering Pritchard family. Norman and Bessie Pritchard lived there for about eleven years in the 1920s and 1930s. The house thus is connected with yet another well-known local figure, the late Professor Allan Duncan Pritchard of the University of Toronto, whose first nine years were spent in that home.

In addition to its value as a reminder of local history, Sandwick Manor is a landmark for literature. Possibly excepting Merville's Jack Hodgins, Eric Duncan is the Comox Valley's most important literary figure, and he ranks among the top four or five most notable Vancouver Island authors. With a new edition of Duncan's autobiography and poetry currently in preparation, it strikes me as singularly inappropriate to hear of the possibility that his house could be lost.

City Hall's promotional material for the current public survey on arts and culture, published last week, quotes you as being 'really proud to support arts and culture'. I trust that you will demonstrate that commitment by working to protect this valuable piece of Courtenay's historic culture.

Sincerely yours,



Brendon Johnson