

# Carrefour Senator Rhéal Belisle Cultural Centre

Address	2777 Main Street, Blezard Valley ON
Owner	City of Greater Sudbury
Construction Date	1899
Legal	Geographic township of Blezard, Lot 11, Concession 5, PCL 2151



Students from Union # 2 Public School in Blezard Valley, 1920. (Valley East Heritage Collection)



Carrefour Rhéal Belisle Cultural Centre in 2016. Note addition to the rear of the building. (CGS Staff)



Location Map



Internal Detail in 2016. Original exterior seen from within new addition. (CGS Staff)

## Historical Significance

Bleazard Valley's first school opened its doors in 1899. Given the growth of the community, Bleazard Valley needed a bigger and more modern school. Bleazard Valley Public School opened its doors in 1913, on the same site as the original building, and continued as a school for almost 5 decades.

In 1958, the Separate School supporters withdrew support in order to build their own school. This left sixteen public school supporters with a high tax burden. By 1960, only two rooms of the building were being occupied by students. The school was eventually put for sale.

Senator Rhéal Belisle, former student and resident of Bleazard Valley, purchased the school in 1963. After 3 years of ownership, Senator Belisle transferred the school to the Diocese of Sault-Ste-Marie.

After sitting vacant for close to 25 years, the Diocese transferred the school to the then Town of Valley-East. In 1983, the municipality decided to renovate and rehabilitate the school, and eventually reopened the building now named "Carrefour Socioculturel Sénateur Rhéal Belisle."

## Cultural Heritage Value

The Cultural Centre has played an important role in the development of Bleazard Valley.

The Centre has direct associations with the development of Bleazard Valley in the early 20th century, first as a school and then as a cultural centre. It has close connections with the educational, cultural and spiritual development of the community.

With a construction date of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the building represents one of the oldest buildings in Greater Sudbury.

The centre has associations with Rheel Belisle (1919-1992), Member of Provincial Parliament (1955-1963), and Canadian Senator (1963-1992).

The Cultural Centre has contextual value because it helps define Bleazard Valley, Main Street in particular, and it is a landmark in the community.

## Architectural Description

The two-storey building is made up of red brick. Its features include a porch at the front of the building, a bell tower, and a full basement partially made up of native stone. The building also features an elevator that is not original to the building. In the early 1980s, the Town of Valley-East added a new section of the building, located at the back. The addition consists of a new rear entrance, stairwell, and washroom facilities. The original exterior and window openings can still be seen from within the addition (see pictures above).

## Sources

Lebelle, Wayne F. (2002), *Valley East 1850-2002*, WFL Communications, Field, Ontario.

Legislative Assembly of Ontario, [www.ontla.on.ca](http://www.ontla.on.ca), accessed on April 28, 2017

Parliament of Canada, [www.lop.parl.gc.ca](http://www.lop.parl.gc.ca), accessed on April 28, 2017

The Sudbury Star, "May have to Sell Their Homes to Pay Public School Taxes", August 31, 1960.



Centre, circa 1973, before addition to the back of the building (Senator Carrefour Rhéal Belisle Cultural Centre Collection)