

FRASER-MACDONALD BUILDING

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4709 49C AVENUE
(ALLAN STREET)

Original Owner: Jessie Fraser and Allan MacDonald

Date of Construction: 1920

HS 10617



DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC PLACE

Located in the downtown neighbourhood in the City of Lacombe just south of the main downtown business area, the Fraser-MacDonald Agency building is a one-storey masonry structure. The building is characterized by its flat roof with stepped front parapets and its glazed storefront with multi-paned windows and recessed asymmetrical entrance. The building was one of 31 buildings in the City of Lacombe involved in the Main Street Program from 1987 to 1993. The façade was reconstructed to resemble its original design.

HERITAGE VALUE OF HISTORIC PLACE

The Fraser-MacDonald Agency building demonstrates Lacombe's success as an important local commercial centre in Alberta during the early twentieth century. At this time, Lacombe emerged as one of central Alberta's predominant commercial and agricultural centres and was situated directly in between Calgary and Edmonton along the C&E Railway line. Constructed in 1920, the Fraser-MacDonald Agency building was built at the time when domestic insurance and real estate needs would have been rebounding following the end of the First World War.

The Fraser-MacDonald Agency building is valued for its association with prominent local businessmen, Jessie Fraser and Allan MacDonald. Both Fraser and MacDonald were real estate and insurance agents, and both worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) and the Hudson's Bay Company Land Registry; both men also represented the major insurance companies. The Fraser-MacDonald Agency building stands today as a representation of the wave of early and successful economic forces, which resulted in the construction of many fine commercial buildings in Lacombe.

The Fraser-MacDonald Agency is additionally valued for its modest one-storey masonry construction, and for being part of a downtown grouping of masonry buildings constructed in Lacombe in the early 1900s. From its prosperous beginning as a link between two major commercial centres, Lacombe developed its own distinctive appearance. Due to the prevalence of brickyards in the community and the by-law requiring downtown buildings to be constructed of brick, many of the downtown commercial buildings today are the original brick buildings that were constructed in the early 1900s. Now carefully conserved, these buildings contribute to one of the most intact historic streetscapes in Alberta.



FRASER-MACDONALD AGENCY N.D. (LDHS 90.1.842)

STATEMENT OF INTEGRITY

This building was part of the Main Street program in the 1980s where new replica storefront windows were installed. The brick cladding is original and is in good condition. The sandstone sections on the pilasters have some mechanical wear but are in good condition overall. The mirrored glass used to replace the original storefront glass is not period appropriate and could be replaced with a non-mirrored glass should a higher level of conservation be pursued. The building is in its original location.

Many buildings in the downtown core display a distinctive Lacombe style, typified by the Edwardian-era Classical Revival style. The Fraser-MacDonald Agency building, like many of the commercial buildings in the city, exhibits modest scale and massing coupled with local materials and handsome detailing.

CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS

Key elements of that define the heritage character of the Fraser-MacDonald Agency include its:

- location on a corner lot along 47C Avenue at the alley in the City of Lacombe;
- commercial form, scale and massing including its one-storey height; rectangular plan; multi-paned glass storefront; and recessed entrance;
- masonry construction;
- Classical-Revival style features including: wood and multi-paned glass storefront; brick cornice and detailed brick fascia; brick pilasters at each side of the front façade with sandstone sections; and
- original interior features including: the pressed-tin ceiling, fireplace, Trans-Canada Air Lines route wall map, and a large wall safe.



Fireplace



Trans-Canada Air Lines route wall map located on southern interior wall



wall safe



Pressed-tin ceiling