

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Site Name: **ST. JOHN'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Date of Construction: 1902 – main church; 1954 – Christian Education wing

Address: 504 2<sup>nd</sup> Street SE (formally Main Street)

Original Owners: Presbyterian Church

Architect: George Lang

Contractors: Charles Purmal (masonry) and Walton & McInnis (carpentry, painting)

Neighbourhood: Downtown

Legal: 1491;5;37-40

Historic Legal: -

ATS: 6-SW-31-12-5-W4



### Description of Historic Place

St. John's Presbyterian Church is a large front-gabled Gothic Revival inspired masonry church with a square tower and dramatic pointed spire located on the corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street at 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE in Medicine Hat's downtown. The church features elegant pointed-arched windows with rusticated sandstone detailing, robust brick buttresses and an octagonal pinnacle. The building is located on a prominent corner lot and has an L-shaped Modern-style addition on the main entryway and north and east sides of the building. Two murals by local artist, James Marshall, are situated on the front of the building.

### Heritage Value of Historic Place

Constructed in 1901-1902, St. John's Presbyterian Church is highly significant as the City of Medicine Hat's oldest church building and as an important community institution and focal point that has served the spiritual and social needs of the Medicine Hat community on the same site for over 130 years. Medicine Hat's Presbyterian congregation was founded in 1883, with the first wooden-frame church constructed on the current site in 1884. As Medicine Hat's population grew with the emigration of Presbyterians from Scotland and Ireland during the Edwardian boom period, so too did this congregation, requiring a larger

place of worship. Plans for the new church were prepared in 1901 and funds were raised by the Building Committee, struck to raise funds from the congregation and organize construction of the building. The church was completed and opened to the public September 21, 1902; with the original wooden-frame church moved to a school site for use as a cottage school (xxxone reference for it being moved to Montreal Street School for use as a cottage school – Montreal Street School research indicates the cottage school was a new build). The new church sanctuary was designed in the amphitheater style and could accommodate up to 400 people. A basement was designed to hold a Sunday school room, classroom space, a library, a kitchen and furnace and fuel rooms. The steady growth of St. John's Presbyterian Church site necessitated several upgrades through the years, including a large addition in 1953-54. Work commenced on the development of a large L-shaped addition on an adjacent property that enveloped the north and east facades of the original church in 1953. The addition, known as the Christian Education Centre (or Robert Taylor Hall), was designed by renowned Calgary architects, Stevenson and Dewar. The additional space provided an auditorium/gymnasium with a stage, and classrooms, and church offices for youth training, teaching, club rental space, and social gatherings. The addition opened in October 1954.

St. John's Presbyterian Church has additional value as an exceptional and early example of the city's high quality architecture constructed using locally sourced building materials, which displays Gothic Revival-style references. George M. Lang (1860-1930), a prolific Calgary-based architect, was retained to design the church. Built at a cost of \$15,000, the church was constructed by local builder Charles Purmal (stonework, brickwork, and plasterwork only) using brick from the Purmal brickyard and sandstone acquired from a sandstone quarry south of town by contractor, A.P. Burns. The Gothic Revival style was one of the most favoured architectural expressions for religious structures in Alberta. Clad in uniform red brick, this historic landmark features slender and delicate Gothic pointed arch windows, a steeply pitched front gabled roof and a square corner tower with slender corner pinnacles and a dramatic steeple. Sandstone was utilized to define the basement level and to accentuate the windows and buttresses. Later additions provide evidence of the church's evolution over time, including modifications to the corner entry and additions at the rear and side elevations.

St. John's Presbyterian Church is further valued as a landmark in the community, due to its over 110-year presence in the Downtown, and its remarkable craftsmanship and Gothic-Revival inspired design.

#### **Character-Defining Elements**

The key elements that define the heritage character of the St. John's Presbyterian Church include, but are not limited to its:

- location on a corner lot at 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE in Downtown Medicine Hat;
- narrow setback from the street in commercial and institutional context.

#### **Elements of Original 1902 building including:**

- form, scale, and massing of original building as expressed by its: rectangular plan building; one-storey height with front gabled roofline; square corner tower; side gabled projections on west and north façades;
- masonry construction including: concrete foundation; sandstone blocks at foundation with red mortar, sandstone sills and buttress caps; red pressed brick with recessed red mortar;
- Gothic Revival-style details including: narrow and paired pointed arched window openings with drip moulds; square tower with circular windows, corbelled cornice, steeple with wrought iron spire and pinnacles at each corner of the tower; stepped brick buttresses with sandstone caps; octagonal pinnacle with spire and copper cladding; wooden bargeboards with narrow eaves and exposed scroll cut rafters; circular windows with louvers in tower and west façade;
- fenestration such as: single and double assembly pointed arched windows deeply recessed from window opening with one-over-one single-hung diamond-paned leaded glass or fixed cathedral

- glass with wooden exterior storms; double assembly segmental arched window openings with jack arches with single-hung wooden sash windows;
- additional elements including: internal corbelled brick chimney on east side of building; and
  - original interior elements including: wooden trim; wooden truss in sanctuary; vents.

**Elements of 1954 building:**

- form, scale, and massing of addition including its: L-shape plan building; one-storey height on east facade; two storey height on rear facade;
- masonry construction including: concrete foundation; red pressed brick in common bond with recessed grey mortar;
- Modern-style details including: blank box with flat roof and little ornamentation; flat awning roof over west and north entryways; and
- fenestration such as: double and triple assembly window openings; reeded glass block in large rectangular openings; and
- additional elements such as: brick murals on south facades by James Marshall; sandstone cornerstone, internal brick chimney in north two storey portion of building.



## Additional Images



West façade of church, June 2015 (DLA)



View of 1965 entryway addition, June 2015 (DLA)





Close-up of pinnacle, June 2015 (DLA)



James Marshall's mural on south façade of 1965 addition, June 2015 (DLA)





Sandstone foundation showing salt damage and replaced portion, June 2015 (DLA)



Original window in tower on west facade, June 2015 (DLA)





Close up of west gabled projection showing twinned pointed arched windows and circular louvre, June 2015 (DLA)



Window replacements at basement level on west facade, June 2015 (DLA)





Original windows at basement level, west facade, June 2015 (DLA)



Rear of building showing 1954 addition and gabled extension added in 1941, June 2015 (DLA)





Steeple, June 2015 (DLA)



North façade of 1954 addition showing window replacement. Note infilled circular louvre in 1941 gabled addition, June 2015 (DLA)



Sanctuary. Note painted truss and window trim, original, June 2015 (DLA)



Sanctuary showing mezzanine, June 2015 (DLA)





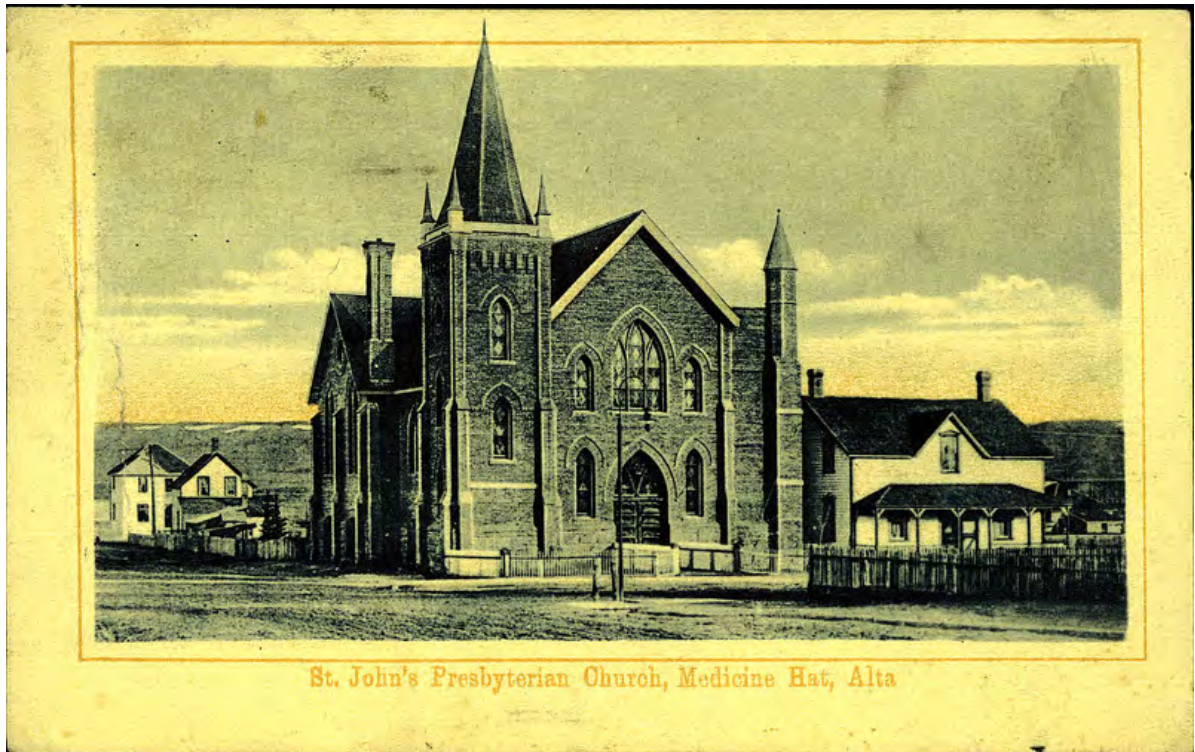
Interior of 1965 entryway addition, June 2015 (DLA)



Interior of 1954 gymnasium, June 2015 (DLA)



Historic Images



St. John's Presbyterian Church, 1910s (Provincial Archives, PC010795)



Dedication ceremony for new hall, 1953, showing original entryway (St. John's Presbyterian Church)




### Statement of Integrity

<b>Property Name &amp; Address</b>	St. John's Presbyterian Church 503 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street SE
<b>Value Summary</b>	<p>This site is significant because.....</p> <p><b>Theme/Activity/Cultural Practice/ Event</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No          Constructed in 1901-1902, St. John's Presbyterian Church, is highly significant as the City of Medicine Hat's oldest church building and as an important community institution and focal point that has served the spiritual and social needs of the Medicine Hat community on the same site for over 130 years.. <b>(Theme Value – Education in Medicine Hat).</b></p> <p><b>Institution/Person</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><b>Design/Style/Construction</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No          St. John's Presbyterian Church has additional value as an exceptional and early example of the city's high quality architecture constructed using locally sourced building materials, which displays Gothic Revival-style references. <b>(Theme Value – Built in Medicine Hat).</b></p> <p><b>Information Potential</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><b>Landmark/Symbolic Value</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No          St. John's Presbyterian Church is further valued as a landmark in the community, due to its over 110-year presence in the Downtown, and its remarkable craftsmanship and Gothic-Revival inspired design.</p>
<b>Period of Significance</b>	1885-1905 Railway Era/Early Settlement
<b>Chronology of Alterations</b>	1905 – coal furnaces converted to natural gas 1919 – Casavant Pipe Organ installed 1914 – manse constructed 1941 – addition to rear of building for Choir Loft 1948 – Renovation to interior- dark cedar wainscoting covered with plywood, stairways changed, ceiling ornamentation removed 1953-54 – Centre of Christian Education built on east façade for \$106,000 – Johnson Construction Co., contractor 1957- Original dark oak pews replaced with light oak pews. 1960s – Leaded glass windows installed (donated by congregation members) 1965 – New front entrance to church added 1975 – elevator installed 1983- Interior renovations
<b>Aspects of Integrity</b>	<p><b>Location</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable          The location of St. John's Presbyterian Church has not changed.</p> <p><b>Design</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable          Apart from the east and west facades, and the modern-style front entryway, the building's design has remained largely intact. The front entryway addition has obscured the design of the front façade.</p>

	<p><b>Environment</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The building continues to be situated in the downtown core in Medicine Hat.</p> <p><b>Materials</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The historic materials are intact apart from the front entryway which was removed with the addition of the 1965 new entryway.</p> <p><b>Workmanship</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The workmanship is evident in the high quality materials, and construction.</p> <p><b>Feeling</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The church continues to convey a strong historical aesthetic.</p> <p><b>Association</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The building continues to be utilized as a church.</p>
<p><b>Statement of Integrity</b></p>	<p>The <u>St. John's Presbyterian Church</u> maintains all the aspects of integrity necessary for it to convey its significance/heritage value.</p> <p>The church is in excellent condition considering its age. The most profound change to the building, which has impacted how the building is understood, is the 1965 addition to the entryway. A major L-shaped addition was added in 1953-54 that was constructed on the east side and south side of the property. This addition adheres to good conservation practice by differentiating from and is subordinate to the original building. In 1965, a full height masonry addition was added to the front façade; both obscuring and obliterating the original front entryway. Formally the front entryway opened at grade, with no stairs. The newer entryway filters people in from a side entryway.</p> <p>Apart from the additions, the building is in good condition. The roof is in excellent condition and has been recently replaced. Consider colour matching or selecting darker colour for future roof replacement to align more with original hue and</p> <p>Overall, the bricks and mortar are in good condition. Some of the bricks are stained and some have been damaged by graffiti. The south façade of the 1954 building displays efflorescence at the base of the wall that should be monitored. The sandstone, quarried locally, is in fair to poor condition in many locations, particularly at the foundation level where salt has eroded and undercut much of the sandstone blocks. In many locations, the sandstone has been repaired and/or replaced in-kind, with varying degrees of craftsmanship. It is recommended to ensure that historic masons have at least 5 years of experience working on similar projects and have access to high quality sources for sandstone that match existing sandstone.</p> <p>The windows for the most part are in good to fair condition. The pointed arched windows originally held diamond-paned leaded glass windows – the majority of which have been replaced. The newer inserts are stained cathedral glass windows donated by various families in the congregation beginning in the 1960s to the present. The full height basement windows</p>



	<p>on the west façade have been replaced with vinyl for all but two of the window openings. These wooden sash windows are in fair condition, requiring re-puttying and painting. The single-hung wooden sash windows on the north façade of the 1954 addition have largely been replaced with vinyl.</p> <p>A circular louvre in the north façade of the gable peak on the original building was infilled at some point.</p> <p>The bargeboards are intact but require repainting.</p> <p>The interior has been largely updated beginning in the 1940s. In the sanctuary, only the window and door trim and wooden truss have been retained; however, all wooden elements have been painted.</p>
--	--

	Site Number	Category A
	Community District Downtown	
	Designation Municipal Historic Resource	

<b>Site Name(s):</b> St. John's Presbyterian Church					
<b>Municipal Address:</b> 504 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street SE		Date of Construction:	1902, 1955		
<b>Consultant(s):</b> Donald Luxton & Associates Inc.		Evaluation Date:	Y 15    M 06    D 22		
<b>Heritage Committee:</b> Heritage Resources Committee					
<b>Heritage Planner:</b>					
			<table border="1"> <tr><td>TOTAL</td></tr> <tr><td>79</td></tr> </table>	TOTAL	79
TOTAL					
79					

History (H)	E	VG	G	F	P		(H) SCORE
H.1 Associations/Patterns	X					40	40
H.2 Age	X					20	
Comments: H.1 St. John's Presbyterian Church is the oldest church in the City of Medicine Hat. H.2 Constructed in 1902.							

Architecture (A)	E	VG	G	F	P	(A) SCORE
A.1 Style/Type/Design		X				20
A.2 Designer/Builder		X				10
A.3 Construction Technology			X			5
A.4 Interior Details			X			4
A.5 Alterations				X		-20
Comments: A.1 The building displays Gothic Revival style references. A.2 Architect: George M. Lang; Contractor: Charles Pural (stone), A. P. Burns (sandstone) A.3 Load bearing red brick walls. Sandstone watertable, banding, buttress caps, sills. A.4 Wooden trim, trusses (sanctuary), vents. A.5 1954 L-shaped addition to east and south facades. 1965 addition to the front/south facade.						

Urban Context (C)	E	VG	G	F	P		(C) SCORE
C.1 Landmark/Character		X				10	20
C.2 Streetscape/Landscape		X				10	
Comments: C.1 St. John's Presbyterian Church is a highly identifiable landmark in Medicine Hat's downtown. C.2 The church contributes to the historic aesthetic of the streetscape.							