

Site Name: **READY KNOWLES RESIDENCE**
Date of Construction: 1911 (residence), 1912 (garage)
Address: 554 Cambridge Street
Original Owner: J. Peard
Architect: J. Peard (residence), Worthy (garage)
Contractors: J. Peard (residence), Worthy (garage)
Neighbourhood: Downtown/SE Hill
Legal: 636M;91:14
ATS: 4;5;12;31;S



Description of Historic Place

The Ready Knowles Residence is a two-storey Classical Revival style residence situated on a corner lot adjacent to a lane on Cambridge Street SE between 5 Avenue SE and 6 Avenue SE in a residential neighbourhood in the City of Medicine Hat. The residence is identifiable by its unique smooth finished moulded concrete block exterior which is punctuated by quoining and bands of rough finished moulded concrete block; a two-storey front-gabled bay with half-moon window in the gable peak; and an enclosed front porch with fluted columns with ionic capitals. The residence possesses a landscaped yard with mature trees which is partially enclosed by a low moulded concrete block wall.

Heritage Value of Historic Place

The Ready Knowles Residence, constructed in 1911, is valued as an exceptionally rare and intact example of the use of locally manufactured moulded concrete blocks in a residential context in the City of Medicine Hat. The majority of Medicine Hat's masonry residences were constructed using brick, manufactured from one of the numerous brickyards in the City and surrounding region. The Ready Knowles Residence represents a unique departure from this standard through its use of both smooth and rough moulded concrete block in its construction. The residence was designed and built by J. L. Peard, for a cost of \$3000. At the time of the residence's construction, Peard was manager of Medicine Hat Concrete Products Ltd., which likely influenced his choice of construction materials. The company, situated south of Seven Persons Creek between 13th and 5th Avenues, produced a variety of concrete products including moulded concrete block. The blocks were typically used in the construction of low walls; however, their use in residential construction in the City of Medicine Hat was limited. The Ready Knowles Residence possesses both smooth and rough blocks, with the latter used as architectural detailing. The durability of the concrete blocks is evident by the condition of the exterior of the residence. Although constructed by Peard, the residence's first occupants were Thomas Victor Ready and his wife. Ready, co-founder and operator of the Monarch Theatre, constructed a garage using moulded concrete block at the rear of the property to house his McLaughlin in 1912. The property has changed ownership only four times since it was constructed, with the present owners the Knowles, purchasing the property in 1969.

The Ready Knowles Residence is further valued as an exquisite example of an Edwardian-era Classical Revival style residence. This style of architecture reflects a shift in design preferences from the exaggerated ornamentation of the earlier Victorian era. The transition of architecture styles at the start of the 20th century is linked with the reign of Edward the VII (1901 – 1910); however the style persisted into the 1920s in Canada. Classical Revival architecture is characterized by a simplification in design and ornamentation with sparing use of classical architectural elements such as columns and pediments, and a simplified massing, balanced design, and reduction in the variety of exterior cladding materials. Classical Revival architecture was fueled by a resurgence in the study of Greek and Roman buildings. This style of architecture was used to convey ideas of society and equality through its elegant simplicity and was frequently used in the construction of public buildings in Alberta during the Edwardian period. The Ready Knowles Residence reflects this architectural style through its rectangular-plan with projecting two-storey bays on the front and rear façades, limited use of exterior materials such as moulded concrete block with wooden cladding restricted to gable peaks and dormer cheeks, fluted columns with ionic capitals on rough finished moulded concrete block piers, and architectural detailing through the use of rough finished moulded concrete blocks. A modern post and laminated beam addition was constructed at the rear of the residence in 1972.

Character-Defining Elements

The key elements that define the heritage character of the Ready Knowles Residence include, but are not limited to its:

- location on the north side of Cambridge Street SE between 5th Avenue SE and 6th Avenue SE in a Medicine Hat residential neighbourhood;
- positioning setback from the street on a large rectangular lot bordered by public lane on its east side;
- landscaping of mature conifer trees, grassed yard with numerous flower beds and a moulded concrete block wall bordering the property's south boundary and a portion of its east;
- form, scale, and massing as expressed by its: two-storey height with full-height basement; be;; caste hipped roof; rectangular plan; projecting two-storey bay with front-gabled roof at the front façade; two-storey bay with hipped roof at the rear façade; hipped roof dormers;
- wooden-frame construction with: concrete foundation; moulded concrete block;
- Classical Revival-style details including: clean form with minimal ornamentation; smooth finished moulded concrete block; rough moulded concrete block quoining; horizontal banding of rough moulded concrete block at sill, lintel, and frieze height; fluted columns with ionic capitals on rough finished moulded concrete block piers; moulded concrete fenestration surround with egg and dart trim; generous eaves with tongue and groove soffits; rectangular wooden shingle cladding on dormer cheeks; rectangular wooden shingles and fish scale shingles in gable peaks;
- fenestration such as: single assembly 1-over-1 single hung wooden-sash windows; fixed wooden-sash window with diamond pattern leaded glass transom; fixed diamond pattern leaded glass piano widow; rectangular window openings; half-moon fixed wooden sash window in gable peak of front bay; multi-light fixed wooden-sash windows on enclosed porch; single panel multi-light wooden porch door with multi-light wooden-sash transom; seven-panel Eastlake style wooden front door with single glass panel; three-panel wooden door with upper glass panel at second floor balcony over front porch;
- additional elements including rough finished moulded concrete block chimney; and
- original interior elements including: oak floors; wooden baseboards; wooden window casing, wooden door casing with recessed panels; coffered ceiling in living room; wooden newel post and square spindle balustrade; five-panel wooden doors and hardware; Arts and Crafts style wooden fireplace with tile surround.

Additional Images



Front façade showing later enclosed front porch, and replaced balcony balustrade and entry stairs, 2014 (DLA)



Front façade two-storey bay with rectangular and fish-scale wooden shingles and half-moon fixed wooden-sash window in front-gable peak. Also shown quoining with rough moulded concrete block, 2014 (DLA)



Moulded window casing with egg and dart, smooth moulded concrete block with rough finished moulded concrete block at sill height, 2014 (DLA)



Eastlake-style wooden front door with mould concrete casing with egg and dart detail, 2014 (DLA)



East and north façades showing 1972 addition, 2014 (DLA)



Hipped roof dormer with shingle cheeks and tongue and groove soffits, 2014 (DLA)



Staircase to second floor with wooden newel post and square wooden spindles, 2014 (DLA)



Landing window with decorative wooden casing, 2014 (DLA)



Decorative wooden door casing with coffered ceiling beyond, 2014 (DLA)



Wooden baseboard and door casing, 2014 (DLA)



Five panel wooden door, 2014 (DLA)



Arts and Crafts style wooden fireplace surround and mantel with tile, 2014 (DLA)

Historic Images



Reddy Knowles Residence on the right of the photograph, unknown date (Esplanade Archives)



Reddy Knowles Residence, circa 1920s (Dawn and Jack Knowles)

Statement of Integrity

Property Name & Address	Ready Knowles Residence 554 Cambridge Street SE
Value Summary	<p>This site is significant because.....</p> <p>Theme/Activity/Cultural Practice/ Event (Theme Value – Made in Medicine Hat). <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Institution/Person <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Design/Style/Construction <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>The Ready Knowles Residence, constructed in 1911, is valued as an exceptionally rare and intact example of the use of locally manufactured moulded concrete blocks in a residential context in the City of Medicine Hat (Theme Value – Built in Medicine Hat).</p> <p>The Ready Knowles Residence is further valued as an example of an Edwardian era Classical Revival style residence (Theme Value – Built in Medicine Hat).</p> <p>Information Potential <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Landmark/Symbolic Value <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>
Period of Significance	1906 – 1913 Pre- First World War Boom, Age of Optimism
Chronology of Alterations	1972 Addition to rear of residence 2011 New furnace
Aspects of Integrity	<p>Location <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The location of Ready Knowles Residence has not changed.</p> <p>Design <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The design of the building has been altered through closing in of the front porch and addition to the rear of the residence.</p> <p>Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The building continues to be situated in a residential neighbourhood in Medicine Hat.</p> <p>Materials <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The aspects of the original materials of the building are intact; however the original wooden-sash storm windows have been replaced and the dormer windows have been replaced.</p> <p>Workmanship <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The high quality of the workmanship of the Ready Knowles Residence is evident in its detailing and current condition.</p> <p>Feeling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The building continues to convey a strong historical aesthetic.</p> <p>Association <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The building continues to be used as a residence.</p>

<p>Statement of Integrity</p>	<p>The Ready Knowles Residence all the aspects of integrity necessary for it to convey its significance/heritage value.</p> <p>The Ready Knowles Residence is in good condition with its original form, scale, and massing intact. The two-storey residence has retained its original smooth and rough finished moulded concrete block exterior, which exhibits no signs of failure, cracking, or staining. Unsympathetic repointing is evident on the east side of the residence. The wooden cladding in the gable peak and on the dormers is intact and in good condition. The foundation is in fair condition, with cracks present in the replaced parging, but the extent they may carry into the foundation is unknown. Portions of the original wooden soffits have been retained; however, the majority have been replaced. The roof is in good condition exhibiting no evidence of sagging, or cracked or missing shingles. The residence's original cresting and finials on the ridge of the roof have been lost over time. Wooden-sash windows have been retained; however, the original storm windows have been lost and replaced with aluminum ones. The windows in the dormers have also been replaced. The most significant alterations have occurred to the front porch. The porch was originally open with wooden steps and wooden balustrade. These were lost when the porch was enclosed with lapped wooden siding and a bank of multi-light wooden-sash windows. The second storey balcony above the porch has also been altered through the replacement of the original wooden balustrade with an ornamental metal one. A large addition was added to the rear of the residence in 1972. The addition is in good condition and differs in design from the original residence making it easily identifiable. The addition is restricted to the rear of the residence and not visible from the street. The low moulded concrete block wall that surrounds a portion of the property is original and in good condition. Decorative ironwork has been added to the top of the wall. The interior of the residence possesses many original elements. Overall, the Ready Knowles Residence is well maintained a testament to the current owner's pride of place.</p>
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Site Number	Category A
Community District Downtown/SE Hill	
Designation	

Site Name(s): Ready Knowles Residence
Architect: J. Peard (residence), Worthy (garage)
Contractors: J. Peard (residence), Worthy (garage)

Municipal Address: 554 Cambridge Street SE	Date of Construction:	1911
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Consultant(s): Donald Luxton & Associates Inc.	Evaluation Date:	Y 14	M 06	D 09
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Heritage Committee: Heritage Resource Committee

Heritage Planner: Chris Reddy

TOTAL
70

History (H)	E	VG	G	F	P	(H) SCORE
H.1 Associations/Patterns			X			10
H.2 Age		X				10

Comments:
 H.1 The Ready Knowles Residence was constructed by J. L. Peard, however Thomas Ready, co-founder of the Monarch Theatre, first occupied the house.
 H.2 Constructed in 1911.

Architecture (A)	E	VG	G	F	P	(A) SCORE
A.1 Style/Type/Design		X				20
A.2 Designer/Builder			X			5
A.3 Construction Technology	X					20
A.4 Interior Details		X				8
A.5 Alterations		X				-5

Comments:
 A.1 The Ready Knowles Residence is a good representation of Classical Revival architecture.
 A.2 Architect – J. Peard, Contractor – J. Peard
 A.3 Building constructed using smooth and rough finished moulded concrete block, rare in its use for residential architecture.
 A.4 The interior elements have been retained.
 A.5 Aluminum storm windows have been install, dormer windows replaced, the front porch enclosed, and an addition added to the rear of the residence.

Urban Context (C)	E	VG	G	F	P	(C) SCORE
C.1 Landmark/Character			X			5
C.2 Streetscape/Landscape		X				5

Comments:
 C.1 The Ready Knowles Residence stands out from other masonry residences in the city.
 C.2 The building contributes to the historic aesthetic of the street.