

# Montgomerie Apartments



Date of Construction	1914
Address	621 - 5 (Ottawa) Street SE
Original Owner	Thomas Montgomerie
Architect	Thomas Montgomerie
Contractor	Thomas Montgomerie
Neighbourhood	Downtown
Legal	36556;47

## Description of Historic Place

Montgomerie Apartments is a striking, eclectic style apartment building situated near the corner of 5th Street SE and 6th Avenue SE, overlooking Medicine Hat's downtown commercial core. The three-storey U-shaped building is well proportioned and has symmetrical fenestration, banding, and prominent decorative relief brickwork. Montgomerie Apartments possesses minimal set backs from the street and is situated on a sloped lot on the edge of a residential neighbourhood, with a parking lot to the west.

## Heritage Value of Historic Place

Montgomerie Apartments was built in 1914, one of the last apartment buildings constructed in Medicine Hat prior to the outbreak of the First World War, and is valued as a physical manifestation of the surge of development that occurred in the city during the Edwardian period. The first decades of the 20th century in Medicine Hat witnessed substantial growth in the number and diversity of local industries, due to the city's position along the railway, and

readily available natural gas resources, which resulted in low manufacturing costs. These conditions attracted an influx of immigrants to the city to fill the associated labour demand, which spurred a need for amenities to service the labour force. In particular, low vacancy rates coupled with the rising need for housing close to the downtown core, resulted in the development of multiple apartment buildings, such as Montgomerie Apartments, just outside Medicine Hat's downtown commercial core. Apartment buildings were a unique residential architectural development of the Edwardian period, linked with the growing emergence of the middle-class. The scale and impressive detailing of this building reflect the optimism associated with the Edwardian era prior to the outbreak of the First World War.

Montgomerie Apartments is significant for its ties with long-time Lake of the Woods Milling Company foreman and civic leader, Thomas Montgomerie. Born in Carp, Ontario, in 1874, Montgomerie worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway on the construction of the railway, prior to joining the Lake of the Woods Milling

Company in 1900. He was transferred to Medicine Hat in 1914 to assist in the opening of the Medicine Hat mill in 1916. Montgomerie was also an entrepreneur, who sought to take advantage of the conditions in Medicine Hat. Shortly after his arrival, Montgomerie obtained a building permit for the construction of a 22-suite, three-storey apartment block, to be built for the cost of \$40,000. Its proximity to downtown Medicine Hat made the apartment block ideal for young professionals, with a number of the suites occupied by single men and women. In addition to his real estate venture, Montgomerie participated in public service, serving as both an Alderman for Ward 2, and a long-time Library Board trustee. He remained in Medicine Hat until his death in 1965.

Montgomerie Apartments is valued for its rare eclectic architectural style with elements of both Classical Revival and Gothic Collegiate architecture, and as a notable example of a locally designed building constructed using locally manufactured materials. Montgomerie designed and built the apartment block shortly after his arrival in Medicine Hat, utilizing elements of two distinct English architectural

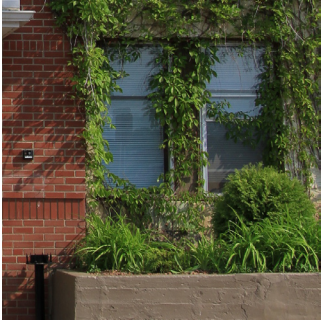
styles: Classical Revival and Gothic Collegiate. Classical Revival architecture evolved through an improved understanding of Greek and Roman architecture and is evident in Montgomerie Apartments' symmetrical plan, quoining, pressed tin cornice with dentils, keystones, horizontal banding, and plain fenestration. The Gothic Collegiate-style of architecture is more commonly reserved for educational institutions and has its roots in the ecclesiastical architecture of the 12th century. The rare non-institutional representation of this architectural style is demonstrated through the apartment block's decorative relief brickwork, multiple stepped parapets, and the exaggerated verticality of the flute pilasters projecting above the roofline across the front façade. The U-shaped plan and skylight over the main stair allow additional light to penetrate interior spaces. Although modifications have been made to the building, the exterior continues to retain its most striking character-defining elements.

Aerial view of Montgomerie Apartments, centre, from circa 1946. A small section of the CPR roundhouse can see at the top-left





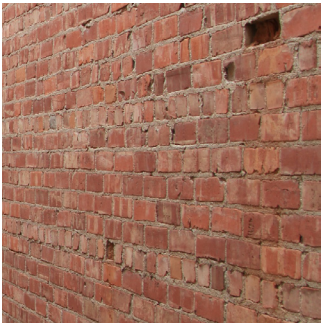
## Character-Defining Elements - Montgomerie Apartments (621 - 5 Street SE)



- Location near the southeast corner of 5th Avenue SE and 6th Street SE on a sloped lot adjacent to a parking lot overlooking Medicine Hat's commercial downtown, with minimal set back from the street



- Landscape elements such as mature trees at the rear of the lot and terraced beds at the front façade



- Form, scale, and massing as expressed by its: three-storey height; U-shaped plan; flat roof



- Masonry construction including: concrete foundation; stretcher pattern pressed red brick exterior with tooled grey mortar on the front façade and plain mortar on the rear façade



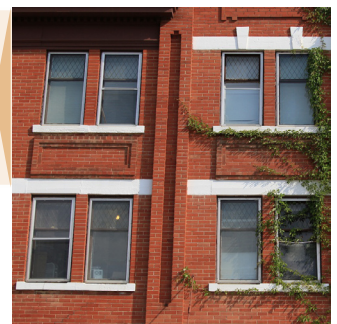
- Classical Edwardian-style details such as: balanced plan; regular fenestration; entry canopy with iron braces; corner quoining; pressed tin cornice with dentils; keystones; horizontal banding; corbelled brick chimneys



- Gothic Collegiate-style details including: multiple parapets; fluted pilasters projecting above the roofline; decorative relief brickwork



- Fenestration such as: single and double assembly 1-over-1 single-hung wooden-sash windows with diamond patterned leaded upper sash; segmental arch single assembly 2-over-1 single-hung wooden-sash windows; single and double assembly 1-over-1 single-hung wooden-sash windows; fixed single light wooden-sash windows; parged sills and lintels throughout; hipped-roof skylight with vent; transom over exterior rear doors



- Additional elements including iron gangway and exit stairs at rear of the building

- Interior features such as: newel post; closed balustrade; cast iron radiators; wooden trim



## Statement of Integrity - Montgomery Apartments (621 - 5 Street SE)

## Applicable Significance Criteria

This site is significant because...

**Theme / Activity / Cultural Practice / Event**

Yes



No

-Montgomery Apartments, one of the last apartment buildings constructed prior to the outbreak of the First World War, is valued as a physical manifestation of the surge of development that occurred in Medicine Hat during Edwardian period (**Theme Value – Managing Growth in Medicine Hat**).

**Institution / Person**

Yes



No

-Montgomery Apartments is significant for its ties with long-time Lake of the Woods Milling Company foreman and civic leader Thomas Montgomery (**Theme Value – Made in Medicine Hat**).

**Design / Style / Construction**

Yes



No

-Montgomery Apartments is valued for its rare, eclectic architectural style with elements of both Classical Revival and Gothic Collegiate architecture, and as a notable example of a locally designed building constructed using locally manufacture materials (**Theme Value – Built in Medicine Hat**).

**Information Potential**

Yes



No

**Landmark / Symbolic Value**

Yes



No

## Period of Significance

1914 - 1918 First World War

## Chronology of Alterations

Circa 1970s - Addition of stucco  
Post 2000 - Renovation of main entry

## Aspects of Integrity

**LOCATION**

Yes



No



Not Applicable

The location of the building has remained unchanged.

**DESIGN**

Yes



No



Not Applicable

The design of the building has not been significantly altered with the exception of the selective application of stucco.

**ENVIRONMENT**

Yes



No



Not Applicable

The building continues to be situated at the edge a residential neighbourhood near Medicine Hat's downtown core.

**MATERIALS**

Yes



No



Not Applicable

The authentic materials of the building are largely intact with the exception of the stucco exterior, renovation of main entry, and replacement of some windows.

**WORKMANSHIP**

Yes



No



Not Applicable

The high quality of the workmanship is evident in building's exceptional detailing and condition.

**FEELING**

Yes



No



Not Applicable

The feeling of the building remains unchanged and continues to convey a strong historical sense.

**ASSOCIATION**

Yes



No



Not Applicable

The association of the building continues to serve as an apartment block.

Statement of Integrity continued on next page...

## Statement of Integrity - Montgomerie Apartments (621 - 5 Street SE)

### Statement of Integrity

*Montgomerie Apartments maintains all the aspects of integrity necessary for it to convey its significance / heritage value.*

The Montgomerie Apartments is in good condition with a significant amount of its original fabric intact. The brick on the front façade is in good condition; however, areas of staining are present, particularly below windowsills. The tooled grey mortar also exhibits evidence of minor mortar loss. Brick and mortar loss is also present on the rear façade of the building. At some point in the past the brick on the sides of the building and ground floor of the front façade has been covered with stucco, obscuring the original detailing and condition of the brick. The stucco is in fair condition; however, staining below the parapet capping and at ground level along the front façade is evident. Portions of the stucco along the front façade exhibit failure and require repair. The front entry has been re-configured and new brick installed. The soldier course of the new brick has not performed as well as the original brick and requires repair to limit further deterioration. The form of the canopy is original to the building; however, the fascia has begun to separate from the underlying frame providing an access point for pests and moisture. The majority of the windows are original; however, no original wooden storms are present. The tin cornice is in good condition; although the upper edge is showing initial signs of wear, which should be monitored. At the time the assessment was completed, roof work was being carried out to address leaks in the building. The vegetation growing on the front façade of the building should be monitored to ensure the underlying materials are not damaged.

## Additional Images - Montgomerie Apartments


Rear of Montgomerie Apartments showing the iron gangway



Donald Luxton & Associates  
April 2013



## Heritage Evaluation Form - Montgomerie Apartments (621 - 5 Street SE)

 <b>Medicine Hat</b> <b>The Gas City</b> <b>Heritage Evaluation Form</b>	Site Number	Category B
	Community District Downtown	
	Designation	

<b>Site Name(s):</b> Montgomerie Apartments			
<b>Municipal Address:</b> 621 - 5 Street SE		Date of Construction:	Y 1914
<b>Consultant(s):</b> Donald Luxton & Associates Inc.		Evaluation Date:	Y 13 M 05 D 15
<b>Heritage Committee:</b> Heritage Resource Committee			
<b>Heritage Planner:</b> Chris Reddy			
		<b>Total</b>	
		65	

History (H)	E	VG	G	F	P		(H) SCORE
H.1 Associations/Patterns		X				20	30
H.2 Age		X				10	
<b>Comments:</b> H.1 Montgomerie Apartments, one of the last apartment buildings constructed prior to the outbreak of the First World War, is valued as a physical manifestation of the surge of development that occurred in Medicine Hat during Edwardian period. H.2 Constructed in 1914.							

Architecture (A)	E	VG	G	F	P		(A) SCORE
A.1 Style/Type/Design		X				20	20
A.2 Designer/Builder				X		3	
A.3 Construction Technology			X			5	
A.4 Interior Details				X		2	
A.5 Alterations			X			-10	
<b>Comments:</b> A.1 Montgomerie Apartments is valued for its rare eclectic architectural style with elements of both Classical Revival and Gothic Collegiate architecture, and as a notable example of a locally designed building built using locally manufactured materials. A.2 Architect – Thomas Montgomerie, Contractor – Thomas Montgomerie A.3 Masonry construction. A.4 Original interior elements such as newel post, closed balustrade, wooden trim. A.5 A number of the original wooden-sash windows replaced. Front entry reconfigured. First floor front façade and entire side façades covered in stucco.							

Urban Context (C)	E	VG	G	F	P		(C) SCORE
C.1 Landmark/Character		X				10	15
C.2 Streetscape/Landscape			X			5	
<b>Comments:</b> C.1 The building's positioning and scale make it a landmark in the neighbourhood. C.2 The building stands apart from the surrounding streetscape.							