

Connaught School



<i>Date of Construction</i>	1912-1913
<i>Address</i>	101 - 8 (Sissons) Street SW
<i>Original Owner</i>	Medicine Hat School District #76
<i>Architect</i>	William T. Williams
<i>Contractor</i>	Lussier Construction Co.
<i>Neighbourhood</i>	SW Hill/Kensington
<i>Historic Neighbourhood</i>	Cousins & Sissons
<i>Legal</i>	2177M;12;1-40

Description of Historic Place

Connaught School is an exquisite and remarkably intact historic brick school exhibiting an eclectic blend of classic English architecture including Tudor Revival and Arts and Crafts styles. The historic school, located southwest of downtown Medicine Hat, is connected to a modern-style addition to the west, built in 1951. The rectangular-plan, two-storey school is set back on the south side of 8th Street SW on two full city blocks. The building features symmetrical massing, banked windows and a prominent central entryway with Arts and Crafts style elements. The building has highly detailed robust corner towers, elegant sandstone quoining, and a central cupola with louvres.

Heritage Value of Historic Place

Connaught School is highly valued for its grand and imposing high-style English architecture and is a significant example of a prominent locally designed and built structure using local materials. The school was designed by Medicine Hat-based architect, William T. Williams, an English-trained architect who brought a refined aesthetic

to a series of landmark buildings in Medicine Hat. Built in 1913, the school represents a collision of English styles; an eclectic blend of Arts and Crafts and Tudor Revival style. Williams arrived in Windsor, Ontario in 1888 and moved to Medicine Hat in 1905. He designed a number of prominent buildings in the city including the Town Hall (1905), several schools, and the Cypress Club (1907). The school, built by the local firm, Lussier Construction Company, showcases Medicine Hat's wealth of high quality materials and impeccable construction techniques expressed by its flawlessly laid, multi-wythe red pressed brick walls from Redcliff Premier Brick and exquisitely carved sandstone from a regionally sourced quarry. The building, constructed for a cost of \$105,000, is richly textured and highly articulated, drawing inspiration from classic Tudor Revival buildings such as Hampton Court in the London borough of Richmond. The building expresses Tudor Revival style with its symmetrical plan, paired banked window openings, and its brick corner towers layered with sandstone quoining and detailed window surrounds. Elements of the Arts and Crafts style are visible in its grandiose central entryway with twinned brick towers supporting a massive

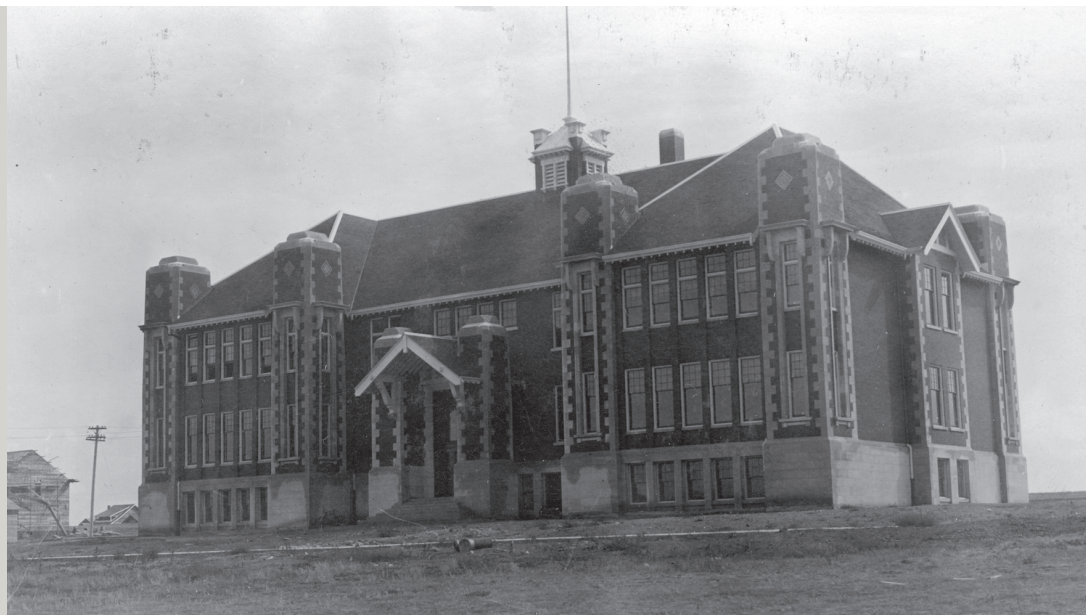
gabled roof with scroll-cut brackets and exposed and notched rafter tails.

Further, Connaught School is highly significant as emblematic of Medicine Hat School District's response and preparation in advance of the city's tremendous growth during the Edwardian boom time in the 1910s, peaking in 1912-13. Medicine Hat School District # 76 was established early in the city's history, officially operational by October 1886. The first permanent school, Toronto Street School, was completed by 1889. One of Medicine Hat's most prolific period of growth in the 1910s spurred one of the largest permanent school building program in the city's history. Connaught School is one of four major permanent schools constructed between 1909 and 1913 in Medicine Hat including: Alexandra High School (1909), Elm Street School (1912), and Elizabeth Street School in 1913. The scale of this school building program was not repeated again until after the Second World War. The cornerstone for the school was laid by the Duke of Connaught on October 11, 1912 and the school was officially changed from the proposed name of Sissons Street School to its current name. The 12-room school opened the following year in September 1913.

Additionally, the heritage value of Connaught School lies in its long-term association as a social focal point and landmark in the community. The school was constructed in the Sissons and Cousins neighbourhood (now SW Hill Kensington) on 8th Street SW, an area of only a few residences at the time the school was opened. Much of the exterior and the interior fabric of the school are original to its construction a century ago, providing a tangible link to the past. Currently, Connaught School operates as the longest running French Immersion program in the city.

Connaught School is also significant for the 1951 modern-style addition of a gymnasium and additional classroom space on the west end of the original school. The new building subtly reflects the original in its materiality and form, adopting red brick as its primary material. The main decorative elements are focused on the front (north) façade of the gymnasium and echo original features of the building. Brick pilasters separating bays of vertical bands of glass blocks anchored with decorative formed concrete panels, mimicking the sandstone detailing on the original building.

Connaught School as it appeared shortly after construction



Nott, Jessop. Esplanade Archives, Medicine Hat, Alberta. 0350.0041.

Character-Defining Elements - Connaught School (101 - 8 Street SW)



- Location on two full city lots southwest of downtown in the City of Medicine Hat; situation set back from the road in a residential context in the SW Hill Kensington (formerly Sissons and Cousins) neighbourhood



- Landscaping such as mature trees lining the front of school; mature deciduous and coniferous trees throughout property; brick public art piece by James Marshall; flagpole adjacent to public art

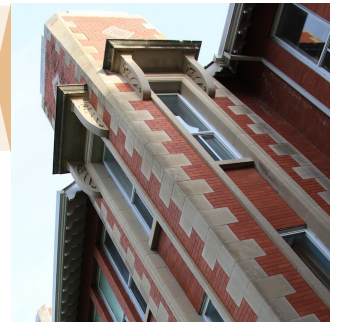
- Form, scale, and massing as expressed by its: two-storey height with full-height basement; rectangular plan; hipped roof with narrow overhanging eaves and exposed rafters; front-gabled projections with corner towers; gabled projections on east and west facades



- Original construction including: sandstone block foundation and detailing with combed finish; red pressed brick with recessed grey mortar; ceramic tile detailing; wooden shingles in cupola



- Tudor Revival-style detailing such as its: symmetrical massing; corner towers with sandstone quoining and caps; decorative ceramic tile inlaid in a diamond pattern at the top of the towers; sandstone window hoods with decorative modillions over top of windows in towers; sandstone window surrounds and sills with guttae below



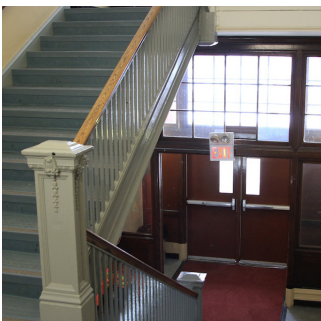
- Arts and Crafts style detailing such as its: central entryway with front-gabled frontispiece with bargeboards, keystone, curved and notched exposed rafters, decorative brackets and half timbering set in pebble-dash stucco at the gable peak; full-height front-gabled projections with half-timbering and pebble-dash stucco on east and west elevations



- Fenestration such as: single and double-banked assembly tall, narrow window openings; central entryway with double doors and wooden-sash fanlights above with pediment over central fanlight; recessed boys and girls entryways with double door openings and multi-paned wooden fanlights



- Additional elements such as: interior red brick chimney with sandstone cap; sandstone cornerstone stating: 'The stone was laid by H.R.H. The Duke of Connaught K.G. Governor General of Canada 11th October 1912 A.D.'; separate boys and girls entryways marked with sandstone signbands carved with 'BOYS ENTRANCE' and 'GIRLS ENTRANCE'



- Expansion of the facility through the 1951 addition on the west side



- Interior elements such as a large gymnasium; wooden trim; transom lights; newel posts; blackboards; and cloakrooms

Statement of Integrity - Connaught School (101 - 8 Street SW)

Applicable Significance Criteria

This site is significant because...

Theme / Activity / Cultural Practice / Event ☒ Yes ☐ No

-Connaught School is highly valued for its grand and imposing high-style English architecture and is a significant example of a prominent locally designed and built structure using local materials. The school was designed by Medicine Hat-based architect, William T. Williams (**Theme Value – Built in Medicine Hat**).

-Connaught School is significant as emblematic of Medicine Hat School District's response and preparation in advance of the city's tremendous growth during the Edwardian boom time in the 1910s, peaking in 1912-13 (**Theme Value – Education in Medicine Hat**).

-Connaught School is also significant for the 1951 modern-style addition of a gymnasium and additional classroom space on the west end of the original school (**Theme Value – Managing Growth in Medicine Hat**).

Institution / Person ☐ Yes ☒ No

Design / Style / Construction ☐ Yes ☒ No

Information Potential ☐ Yes ☒ No

Landmark / Symbolic Value ☒ Yes ☐ No

The heritage value of Connaught School lies in its long-term association as a social focal point and landmark in the community.

Period of Significance

1906 to 1913 Pre-First World War Boom, Age of Optimism

Chronology of Alterations

1912-13 - School constructed
1951 - Gym and classroom addition to west side of school
1964-67 - Library renovation
2007 - Roof replaced

Aspects of Integrity

LOCATION ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable

The location of the school on 8th Street SW has not changed.

DESIGN ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable

The design of the building has been altered with the addition of a gym, classrooms, and library.

ENVIRONMENT ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable

The building maintains its siting in a residential neighbourhood surrounded by large schoolyard and mature trees.

MATERIALS ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable

The original elements of the building remain unchanged, except for replacement of windows and doors.

WORKMANSHIP ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable

The exception workmanship of the building is evident in its fine detailing, materials, and overall condition.

FEELING ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable

The feeling of the building has not altered. The school conveys a strong aesthetic and collegiate sense.

ASSOCIATION ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable

The association of the building remains unchanged.

Statement of Integrity continued on next page...

Statement of Integrity - Connaught School (101 - 8 Street SW)

Statement of Integrity

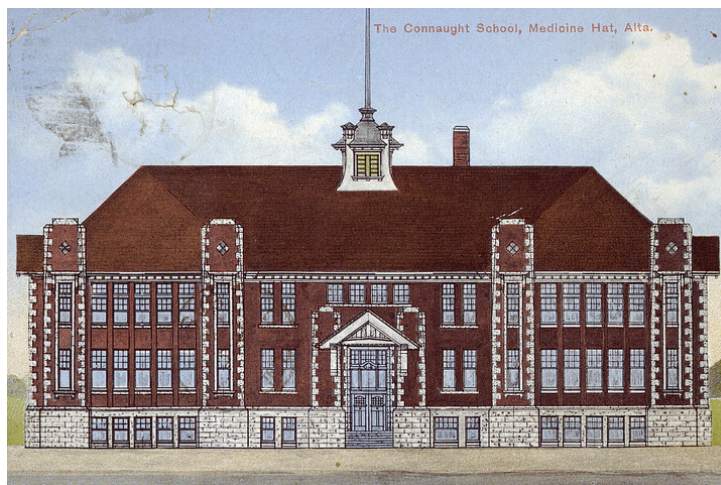
Connaught School maintains all the aspects of integrity necessary for it to convey its significance / heritage value.

Connaught School possesses a high level of integrity including intact form, scale, and massing, and original materiality. The most impactful change to the building occurred with the 1951 one-storey addition on the west side of the school, which saw portions of the school's original west wall removed for its connection. Subsequent alterations in 1964 and 1967 (to the library), compromised and removed original elements of the school's interior. In the last 10-15 years, the original multi-paned wooden-sash windows were replaced with aluminum-sash windows that adhere to pre-existing window opening size. The multi-light wooden doors were also replaced with plain double wooden doors. In 2007 the roof was replaced with a new cedar shingle roof, and the shingles on the cupola appear to have been changed during this process. Damage by the previous failing roof is evident with localized water staining to the brick in various locations. Mortar loss and cracking were noted at several locations on the building and should be monitored. The eave troughs surrounding the window hoods on the towers are in poor condition and should be replaced to prevent damage to the sandstone window surrounds below. The large flag-pole located in the cupola has been removed and should be replaced with a replica. Several carved relief letters are missing from the sandstone cornerstone on the northeast corner and girls and boys signbands on the south facade. Replicas, using similar coloured sandstone should be considered to replace these missing letters.

Additional Images - Connaught School

Exterior view of the southwest corner of Connaught School. The 1951 modern addition can be seen on the left


Donald Luxton & Associates
September 2012



Rumsey & Co.
The Connaught School, Medicine Hat, Alta.
Peel's Prairie Province's
Prairie Postcard Collection. PC004362.

Historical postcard of Connaught School showing its front (north) elevation

Heritage Evaluation Form - Connaught School (101 - 8 Street SW)

 Medicine Hat The Gas City Heritage Evaluation Form	Site Number	Category A
	Community District Southwest Hill	
	Designation	

Site Name(s): Connaught School		
Municipal Address: 101 - 8 Street SW	Date of Construction:	Y 1912-13
Consultant(s): Donald Luxton & Associates Inc. Heritage Committee: Heritage Resource Committee Heritage Planner: Jeanie Gartly	Evaluation Date:	Y 12 M 09 D 06
		Total
		95

History (H)	E	VG	G	F	P		(H) SCORE
H.1 Associations/Patterns	X					40	40
H.2 Age		X				10	
Comments: H.1 The school represents Medicine Hat response and preparation in advance of the city's dramatic Edwardian era growth. It continues to operate as a school. H.2 Constructed 1912 – 1913.							

Architecture (A)	E	VG	G	F	P		(A) SCORE
A.1 Style/Type/Design	X					40	35
A.2 Designer/Builder	X					20	
A.3 Construction Technology				X		3	
A.4 Interior Details				X		2	
A.5 Alterations		X				-5	
Comments: A.1 Eclectic architectural form possessing Tudor Revival and Arts and Crafts elements. A.2 Architect - William T. Williams. Contractor - Lussier Construction Co. A.3 Red pressed brick, carved sandstone. A.4 Numerous original details intact. A.5 Addition in 1951 and alterations in 1964-1967 and 2007.							

Urban Context (C)	E	VG	G	F	P		(C) SCORE
C.1 Landmark/Character		X				10	20
C.2 Streetscape/Landscape	X					15	
Comments: C.1 Representative of early education facility planning in the city and continues to serve the educational needs of the community. C.2 Dominant character of the block.							