

Site Name: **LEVINSON'S MUSIC**
Date of Construction: 1920
Address: 218-220 South Railway Street SE
Original Owners: Joseph and Beatrice Levinson
Architect: Unknown
Contractor: T.J. Depew
Neighbourhood: Downtown
Legal: 1491;14;19
Historic Legal: Plan 1491 Block 14 Lot 19
ATS: 4;5;12;31



Description of Historic Place

Levinson's Music is a one-storey historic brick Edwardian-style commercial building located on South Railway Street in the City of Medicine Hat. The building is located mid block and is connected to buildings of a similar size and scale. The building is distinguished by its parapet roof with projecting flat parapet central portion, recessed panels of brick in the parapet and cornice, and asymmetrical entryway with two angled and recessed doorways flanking an off-centre storefront window.

Heritage Value of Historic Place

Levinson's Music Store is highly significant for its important contribution to the historic commercial fabric of Medicine Hat's South Railway Street and as home to several long-term businesses. The two-suite commercial block was constructed in 1920 as one of only a few brick commercial blocks along South Railway Street in the 1920s. Originally owned by Honourable C.R. Mitchell, a lawyer and later Chief Justice of the Trial Division of the Supreme Court of Alberta and Alberta Cabinet Minister, the building was constructed by T.J. Depew for \$8,000. One of the first tenants was Jesse Elliot in suite 220, a tailor who owned Elliot & Company, considered high end tailors in the city. Elliott was in the building for over 30 years from 1920 to 1953. Afterwards, Suite 220 was leased to Allen's Shoe Repair and Sporting Goods, who operated out of the location from 1955 to 1984. Suite 218, the larger of the two storefronts, was

owned by Joseph Lyon Levinson (1907-1983) who purchased the building in 1943 to move his second hand store into. This business morphed into a men's wear business after the Second World War, and finally into Levinson's Musical Instruments in 1953. Levinson retired and sold the store to Ken Chisholm in 1975, changing the name to Levinson Music (1975). The store continues to function as Levinson's Music in the present day.

Levinson's Music Store also has significant people value for its association to the Levinson family, who were highly influential in the early commercial, and arts and cultural development in the city. B.J. Levinson moved his family to Medicine Hat in 1930 from Winnipeg and purchased an existing raw fur business known as the New York Fur Exchange, located at 314 South Railway Street. With B.J.'s untimely death in 1932, his son, Joseph, became the main proprietor of the business. As the only hide and fur-clearing house in the Medicine Hat District, Levinson managed to survive through the Depression years. In 1942, he began soliciting for used musical instruments a newly formed second hand store business eventually opening as a music store in 1953. Joseph and his wife, Beatrice Elizabeth (nee Muir) (1911-1988), married in 1937, were heavily involved in the arts and cultural scene in Medicine Hat. Elizabeth was a well-known piano teacher and accompanist to several schools in the city and together they supported and sponsored several theatre and musical productions. Joe was a founding member of the Allied Arts Council, and the Ranger's Athletic Club (in 1932). Their contribution to the growth of Medicine Hat's prominent arts and cultural scene is embodied in the Levinson's Music store.

Levinson's Music Store is also significant as a well-preserved representation of late Edwardian commercial architecture. Edwardian commercial architecture dominated historic commercial buildings from the early 1900s to the 1920s in Alberta. The style is typified by brick-clad buildings with exaggerated parapet roofs, handsomely detailed cornices and glazed storefronts. Decorative elements were often formal and subdued compared to the earlier Victorian period, so as to draw attention to storefront merchandise in display windows. The building expresses this style through its parapet roof with central flat roofed pediment, recessed panels at the cornice and two storefronts with recessed angled entryways and storefront glazing.

Character-Defining Elements

The key elements that define the heritage character of Levinson Music Store include, but are not limited to its:

- location on the west side of South Railway Street connected to buildings of a similar size and scale;
- close set-back to the road;
- form, scale, and massing as expressed by its: rectangular massing with flat roof and stepped parapet on front façade; concrete foundation;
- masonry construction including: red pressed brick cladding with grey mortar in running bond; common bond multi-coloured red brick with grey mortar at sides and rear of building; wooden framing; concrete coping on parapet roof
- Edwardian Commercial Revival style such as: stepped parapet roof, recessed brick panels at cornice and parapet; two asymmetrical storefronts with recessed angled entryways and wooden frame storefronts with full height window openings;
- fenestration such as original wood paneled door with mail slot and hardware at Suite 220; single assembly, single-hung windows with parged sills and soldier course lintels at rear of building;
- additional elements such as interior rear corbelled chimney at rear of building; and
- interior elements such as: wooden trim.

Additional Images



Stepped parapet showing missing mortar, 2014 (DLA)



Suite 220 showing original storefront, 2014 (DLA)



Original wooden soffit in storefront entryway, Suite 220, 2014 (DLA)



Suite 218 showing renovated storefront (circa 1950s-1960s), 2014 (DLA)



Storefront cornice with removed frieze and recessed panels above, 2014 (DLA)

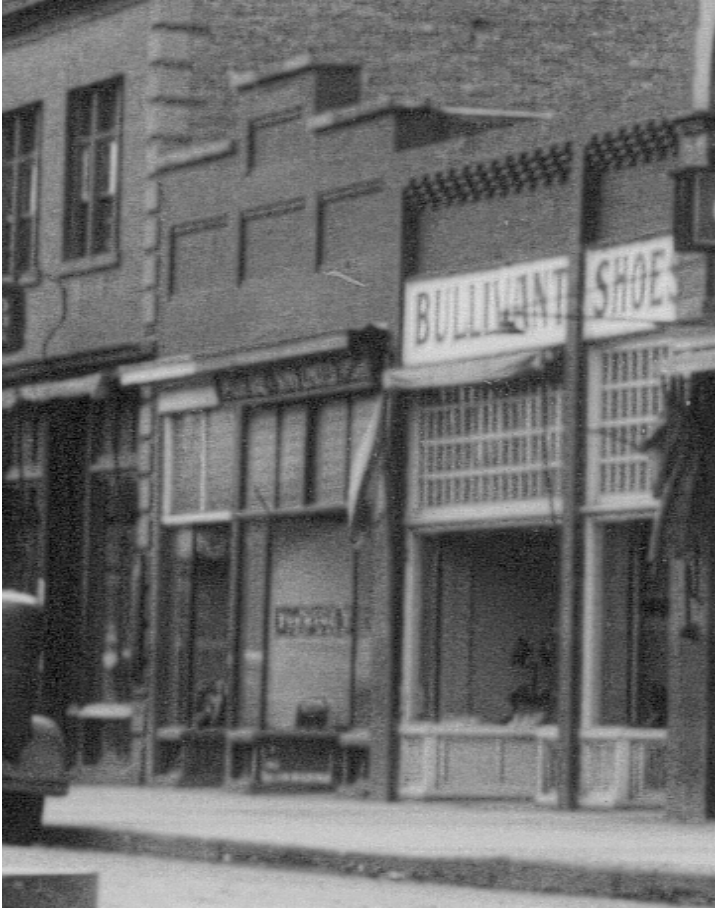


Rear elevation showing original window openings, 2014 (DLA)



Rear chimney with missing mortar, 2014 (DLA)

Historic Images



View of South Railway Street taken from the north, with Levinson's Music Store in the centre, 1930 (Esplanade Archives)



Levinson's Music Store Logo, 1980 (Esplanade Archives)




Front Façade, 1979 (Historic Sites, 78R-402-14)

Statement of Integrity

Property Name & Address	Levinson's Music 218-220 South Railway Street SE
Value Summary	<p>This site is significant because.....</p> <p>Theme/Activity/Cultural Practice/ Event <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Levinson's Music Store is highly significant for its important contribution to the historic commercial fabric of Medicine Hat's South Railway Street and as home to several long-term businesses. (Theme Value – City Development in Medicine Hat).</p> <p>Institution/Person <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Levinson's Music Store is also has significant people value for its association to the Levinson family, who were highly influential in the early commercial and arts and cultural development in the city.</p> <p>Design/Style/Construction <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Levinson's Music Store is also significant as a well-preserved representation of late Edwardian commercial architecture. Edwardian commercial architecture dominated historic commercial buildings from the early 1900s to the 1920s in Alberta.</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	1919-1929 – Post First World War to Stock Market Crash
Chronology of Alterations	1920 – Construction of Building Circa 1950s-1960s – renovation of exterior storefront (primarily Suite 218) and enclosure of transom
Aspects of Integrity	<p>Location <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The location of the store has not changed.</p> <p>Design <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The form, scale, and massing of the building has not changed too significantly apart from the storefront on the north side of the building.</p> <p>Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The area continues to function as a commercial concentration of buildings.</p> <p>Materials <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The materiality of the building has not changed dramatically apart from changes to the storefront.</p> <p>Workmanship <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The workmanship of the building is good.</p> <p>Feeling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The building continues to portray a feeling of Edwardian-style architecture.</p> <p>Association <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable</p>

	The building ties into the low-density commercial nature of the streetscape.
Statement of Integrity	<p>Levinson's Music Store maintains all the aspects of integrity necessary for it to convey its significance/heritage value.</p> <p>The block is in fairly good condition despite some changes to the storefront. Overall, the building has maintained its form, scale, and massing, and its separate storefront entryways. The red pressed brick appears to be in good condition, with no major cracking or spalling. However, at the parapet, years of water infiltration likely from failed parapet coping have resulted in the loss of mortar. Concrete coping is in fair condition and has had some repairs to minor cracks. Repair to mortar at these locations would ensure the continuity of this façade. The storefront has been altered from its original configuration; however, there are several original elements intact and in good condition. The middle section of the storefront has been enlarged and the wooden frame replaced with aluminum frame and sash. This angles back to the door opening to Suite 218. This would have been altered likely sometime in the 1950s-60s. Suite 220 has retained much of its original configuration and wooden elements including the wooden storefront door and the soffits. The storefront transom, originally multipane prism glass, has been covered over with stucco panels. The wooden cornice is likely original; however, the decorative pressed tin frieze below was removed at some point. The windows at the rear of the building are original, but the glass is damaged and they are boarded over. The chimney at the rear of the building is in poor condition with high mortar loss. Roof appears to be in good condition. Portions of the original wooden eave troughs are visible. Newer eave troughs have been attached to these wooden gutters.</p>

	Site Number	Category
	C	
	Community District	
		Downtown
Designation		

Site Name(s): Levinson's Music Store			
Municipal Address: 218-220 South Railway Street SE		Date of Construction:	1920
Consultant(s): Donald Luxton & Associates Inc.		Evaluation Date:	Y 14 M 06 D 09
Heritage Committee: Heritage Resource Committee			
Heritage Planner: Chris Reddy			
			TOTAL
			55

History (H)	E	VG	G	F	P		(H) SCORE
H.1 Associations/Patterns		X				20	25
H.2 Age			X			5	
Comments: H.1 Levinson's Music Store significantly contributes to the historic commercial fabric of Medicine Hat's South Railway Street and as home to several long-term businesses. H.2 1920							

Architecture (A)	E	VG	G	F	P	(A) SCORE
A.1 Style/Type/Design			X			10
A.2 Designer/Builder				X		3
A.3 Construction Technology			X			5
A.4 Interior Details				X		2
A.5 Alterations		X				-5
Comments:						
A.1 The building is a well-preserved example of late Edwardian commercial architecture.						
A.2 Architect: Unknown, Contractor: T.J. Depew						
A.3 Masonry construction using red pressed brick						
A.4 Minimal original interior elements intact.						
A.5. Alterations made to the storefront in the 1950s – 1960s.						

Urban Context (C)	E	VG	G	F	P		(C) SCORE
C.1 Landmark/Character			X			5	15
C.2 Streetscape/Landscape		X				10	
Comments: C.1 The building is a component of Edwardian era buildings on South Railway Street. C.2 Levinson’s Music Store contributes to the historic aesthetic of the streetscape.							