

Site Name: **CRESCENT HEIGHTS SAFEWAY**

Date of Construction: 1959

Address: 97 8th Street NW

Original Owners: Lesmur Holdings Ltd. (agent for Canada Safeway Limited had long-term lease since January 5, 1960)

Architect: Abugov & Sunderland

Contractors: Poole Construction

Neighbourhood: NW Crescent Heights

Legal: 703HE;13;1-11

ATS: SE1-13;6;4



Description of Historic Place

The Crescent Heights Safeway is a highly stylized Expressionist-style commercial grocery store building located on the south side of 8th Street NW on a corner lot intersecting at Tweed Avenue in the Crescent Heights neighbourhood in Medicine Hat. The building features a prominent honeycomb thin-shell concrete roof floating over a glazed curtain wall and anchored by concrete block walls with decorative hexagonal breezeway block. Iconic Safeway signage projects from the roofline and on a neon sign directly west of the building.

Heritage Value of Historic Place

The Crescent Heights Safeway, constructed in 1960, is highly valued as an important cornerstone of the Crescent Heights neighbourhood and has served the needs of the community for over 50 years. The grocery store was built to support the newly developed Crescent Heights neighbourhood, and is significant as symbolic of the earliest development of the neighbourhood. Grocery stores were integral to the servicing of new suburban subdivisions and reflect the typical urban development in Medicine Hat at this time. The Crescent Heights neighbourhood was expanding at the time of the store's construction, with new residential and commercial development to support the Goodyear plant constructed in 1955 in the area. Safeway #232, the third store built in Medicine Hat, was opened on June 8, 1960. Marvin Mock, former Assistant Manager of the Division Avenue store, was its first Manager of the store until 1963. While this size of grocery store was once common in the city, it is now a rarity with stores closed or redeveloped by large format shopping centres.

The Crescent Heights Safeway is further significant as it recalls the rise of chain outlets that now dominate many aspects of retail marketing, Post-war prosperity, and the increasing importance of the automobile in Medicine Hat. The rise of the automobile marked a shift in food distribution patterns, as rail transport was superseded by long-haul truck transport, and enhanced transportation systems that enabled centralized warehousing and distribution. Established in 1912 as the Sam Seelig Company in Los Angeles, North

America's first self-service grocery store was sold in 1925 and renamed Safeway. The company expanded into Canada and Alberta in 1929 with the first store opening in Medicine Hat in 1930. By the 1940s, Safeway had shifted its design to the large volume 'supermarket' style of modern stores, which began to dominate food distribution networks in the Post-war era. Changing tastes and styles prompted the company to modernize its corporate image, and in 1959 the company opened the first arched roof prototype "Marina-style" store on Marina Boulevard in San Francisco.

The Crescent Heights Safeway is also valued as a superb and largely intact example of a once common Safeway style in southern Alberta and Saskatchewan in the 1960s, during a period when Safeway closely aligned their branding to architecture. The building was designed by prominent Calgary-based engineering and architectural firm, Abugov & Sunderland, who designed Edmonton's CN Tower (1966), West Edmonton Mall (1980s), and Calgary Place towers (1969). Elements of the Safeway design included a rectangular plan, a prominent all-glass front façade that allowed abundant natural sunlight into the store, an open and spacious floor plan and exposed interior glulam beams. Variations between the stores lay in their roof style and decorative veneers. Safeway used this highly successful standardized plan throughout the 1960s to communicate consistently their corporate identity. Over time, shifting marketing techniques led to a change in Safeway's corporate identity whereby architecture was not an important component of their brand.

The Crescent Heights Safeway expresses this corporate architectural design through its rectangular one-storey plan, full-front glazed curtain wall, clerestory windows, and open, clear-span interior. This particular model of Safeway features a striking thin shell concrete roof formed into flattened hexagons that connect across the roofline. Hexagon breezeblock veneer, recessed from the central glazing on the front façade accents each side of the glazed front. The structure is open in the interior, with exposed glulam beams, providing an impressive open volume. Glulam beams were a relatively new technology at the time of construction, and allowed an expansive, flexible and uninterrupted multi-aisled layout, maximizing the efficiency of the store and the amount of goods that could be displayed. Its location at the corner lot allowed for a large surface parking area to the east of the store. Iconic neon signs, designed by Calgary-based Neon products marks the northwest corner of the lot. Stores featuring this model were also found in Calgary and Saskatchewan. The Crescent Heights Safeway is the best preserved and most original of the known stores.

The distinctive architecture of the building combined with its prominent location and its integral, historic status as a focal point of the neighbourhood serve to make it a community landmark.

Character-Defining Elements

The key elements that define the heritage character of the Crescent Heights Safeway include, but are not limited to its:

- close setback from 8th Street NW at Tweed Avenue on a corner lot;
- form, scale and massing as expressed by its one-storey height and rectangular plan with an Expressionist-style, thin shell concrete roof in flattened hexagonal pattern connected across the roofline; parapet roof on sides of building; recessed glazed storefront; grade-level access to the front doors;
- masonry construction including concrete block over steel-frame structural system; hexagonal breezeblock veneer walls over brick veneer base inset from central curtain wall and flanking the entries; plywood soffits; wood-paneled base at front façade;
- original fenestration comprising four fully glazed central bays with clerestory glazing at sides of bay; aluminum frames and narrow mullions; aluminum sash fully glazed entry and exit doors on each side of glazed bays;
- additional details such as: inset lighting in soffits under roof; neon sign at northwest corner of property; Safeway logo sign on breezeblock; raised 'Safeway' letters above roof; and

- interior features such as its open character with soaring volume; massive, exposed, curved glue-laminated wood-truss beams supported on steel pipe columns; original freezers, original clock at rear centre of store on wall; original wicket on northwest side of store.



Close-up of the hexagonal breezeblock (Donald Luxton & Associates, 2014)



Close-up of the hexagonal thin shell concrete roof (Donald Luxton & Associates, 2014)



Overhanging roof showing inset lighting and lighting over side entryway, facing west (Donald Luxton & Associates, 2014)



Damage to brick veneer and concrete wall, east side, by grocery carts (Donald Luxton & Associates, 2014)



Rear (south) of building (Donald Luxton & Associates, 2014)



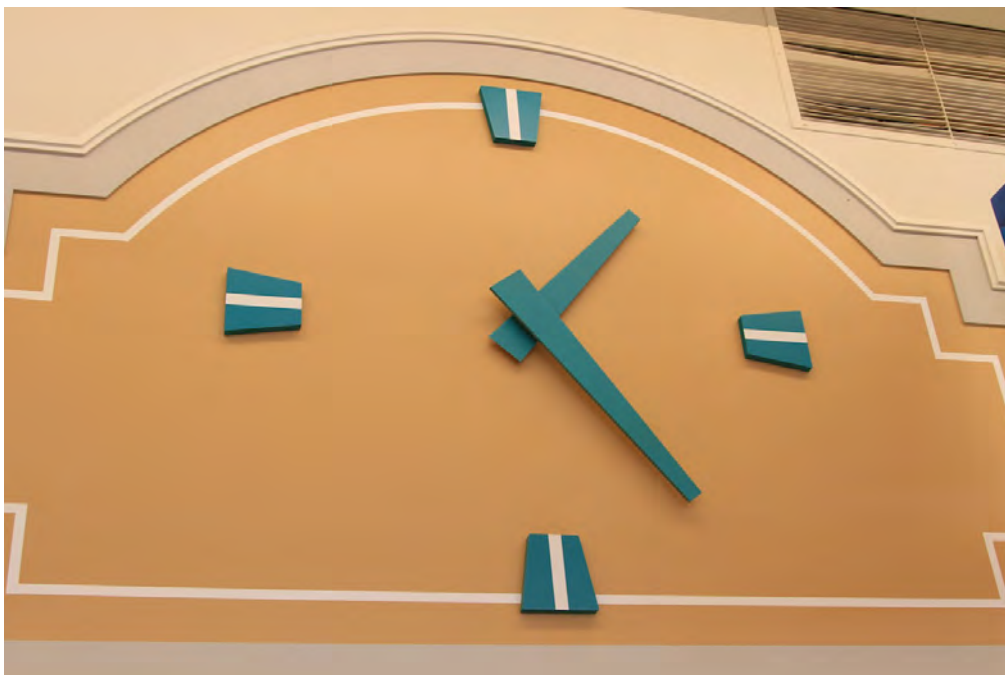
Shed addition added in 1965 (Donald Luxton & Associates, 2014)



Pylon sign in parking lot (Donald Luxton & Associates, 2014)



Interior exposed glulam beams and new HVAC (Donald Luxton & Associates, 2014).



Original clock at south end of building (Donald Luxton & Associates, 2014).



Interior of building (Donald Luxton & Associates, 2014).



Interior of building showing front tills and glazing (Donald Luxton & Associates, 2014).



Opening day of Safeway, June 1960 (Courtesy Crescent Heights Safeway).



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Statement of Integrity

Property Name & Address	Crescent Heights Safeway 97 8th Street NW
Value Summary	<p>This site is significant because...</p> <p>Theme/Activity/Cultural Practice/ Event <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No The Crescent Heights Safeway, constructed in 1960, is highly valued as an important cornerstone of the Crescent Heights neighbourhood and has served the needs of the community for over 50 years (Theme Value – Managing Growth in Medicine Hat).</p> <p>The Crescent Heights Safeway is further significant as it recalls the rise of chain outlets that now dominate many aspects of retail marketing, Post-war prosperity, and the increasing importance of the automobile in Medicine Hat (Theme Value – City Development in Medicine Hat).</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 The Crescent Heights Safeway is also valued as a superb and largely intact example of a once common Safeway style in southern Alberta and Saskatchewan in the 1960s, during a period when Safeway closely aligned their branding to architecture (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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No The distinctive architecture of the building combined with its prominent location and its integral, historic status as a focal point of the neighbourhood serve to make it a community landmark (Landmark Value).</p>
Period of Significance	1957-1982 (Modern)
Chronology of Alterations	1965 – Garage and shed addition on west side 1969 – Elevating dock on south façade, west side 1996 - glulam beams painted, neon sign in interior removed, and clock moved 2002 – Fire rated roof added,
Aspects of Integrity	<p>Location <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The location of the building on 8th Street has not changed.</p> <p>Design <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The building has not changed since it was first constructed. A few minor additions were made early in the building's history on the west façade, otherwise the building is entirely original.</p> <p>Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The building continues to be located in Crescent Heights.</p> <p>Materials <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The materials of the building remain almost entirely intact.</p> <p>Workmanship <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable</p>

	<p>The building's workmanship remains evident.</p> <p>Feeling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The building's feeling has not changed as it continues to function as a grocery store.</p> <p>Association <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The association of the building has not changed.</p>
	<p>The Crescent Heights Safeway maintains all the aspects of integrity necessary for it to convey its significance/heritage value.</p> <p>The Crescent Heights Safeway is in nearly original condition and is both well maintained and has retained most of its original elements. The thin shell concrete roof is in good condition, with the plywood insets and soffits showing a small amount of wear. The roof has been painted sometime in the last 5-10 years. The breezeblock on either side of the glazed curtain wall appears to be in excellent shape. There is a single missing hexagonal block on the west side, over the Safeway logo sign and two missing on the east side. These can be sourced and replaced should restoration be an option for the building. The brick veneer below the breezeblock appears to be damaged in places due to its location as storage for the shopping carts. The four glazed bays appear to be in original condition, with the aluminum sashes in excellent condition. The glazing over the doors on either side of the curtain wall has been covered to shield from the sun. The neon sign on the northwest corner of the building is in good condition and has been well maintained with only small areas where paint has delaminated. Most of its original components intact; however, the original clear neon has been replaced with coloured neon.</p> <p>Interior The interior has had some updates but is largely original. The original design scheme of the interior was light blue, pink and yellow and the exposed glulam beams unpainted. Neon signs demarked the various departments within the store; these have since been removed. A 1996 renovation witnessed the painting of the wooden glulam beams as well as an update to the paint scheme. The clock on the south wall of the building, at the rear of the store, is original but has been updated and painted. Most of the shelving and freezers are original. A large HVAC system has been added to the building, obscuring the sightlines to the glulam beams. This HVAC system is visible from the outside of the building through the glazed panels.</p>

	Site Number	Category A
	Community District Crescent Heights	
	Designation	

Site Name(s): Crescent Heights Safeway									
Municipal Address: 97 8 th Street NW			Date of Construction: 1960						
Consultant(s): Donald Luxton & Associates Inc.			Evaluation Date: <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Y</td> <td>M</td> <td>D</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14</td> <td>06</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </table>	Y	M	D	14	06	10
Y	M	D							
14	06	10							
Heritage Committee: Heritage Resources Committee			<table border="1"> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> </tr> <tr> <td>78</td> </tr> </table>	TOTAL	78				
TOTAL									
78									
Heritage Planner: Chris Reddy									

History (H)	E	VG	G	F	P		(H) SCORE
H.1 Associations/Patterns		X				20	23
H.2 Age				X		3	
Comments: H.1 The Safeway was the third Safeway opened in Medicine Hat and has functioned as a Safeway since its opening with very few changes to the building. H.2 Constructed in 1960.							

Architecture (A)	E	VG	G	F	P		(A) SCORE
A.1 Style/Type/Design	X					40	40
A.2 Designer/Builder		X				10	
A.3 Construction Technology		X				10	
A.4 Interior Details		X				8	
A.5 Alterations	X					0	
Comments: A.1 The building is a rare example of Safeway's corporate architecture in the Post-war period. The design was once popular in southern Alberta and Saskatchewan. This is the most intact example of this design. A.2 Architect is Abugov & Sunderland who were well known and respected architects: Edmonton CN Tower (1966), West Edmonton Mall (1980s). A.3 The building is constructed of concrete block with thin shell technology roof in flattened hexagon style. A.4 The interior is largely original with minor updates including paint and addition of a large HVAC unit that are removable. A.5 Very few additions to the building and are not visible from the front facade.							

Urban Context (C)	E	VG	G	F	P		(C) SCORE
C.1 Landmark/Character		X				10	15
C.2 Streetscape/Landscape			X			5	
Comments: C.1 The Safeway is highly visible in the Crescent Heights neighbourhood. C.2 The building's mid century aesthetic contributes significantly to the streetscape.							