

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Site Name: **HARGRAVE SISSONS BLOCK AND ANNEX**

Date of Construction: 1901, 1909 (Annex)

Address: 667, 669, and 675 2<sup>nd</sup> Street SE

Original Owners: James Hargrave and Daniel Sissons

Architect: Unknown

Contractor: Unknown

Neighbourhood: Downtown

Legal: 1491;14;15

ATS: 10;NE;31;12;5;4



### Description of Historic Place

The Hargrave Sissons Block and Annex is comprised of two brick buildings situated near the CPR tracks on the corner of South Railway Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street SE in Medicine Hat's historic downtown core. The two-storey commercial block is highly identifiable by its chamfered corner entry, full-height storefront bays separated by brick pilasters on the street façades, red pressed brick exterior, sandstone elements such as watertable, quoining, sills, lintels, and pilaster caps, and regular fenestration on the second floor. A one-storey red pressed brick Annex with full-height storefront is connected to the Hargrave Sissons Block's southwest façade.

### Heritage Value of Historic Place

The Hargrave Sissons Block and Annex, built in 1901 and 1909 respectively, are valued as representative of the impressive period of economic development and construction at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the City of Medicine Hat. At the time the CPR crossed the South Saskatchewan River in April 1883, the landscape of Medicine Hat was that of a tent town. Commercial businesses that were present during this formative period typically operated out of tents or shacks – including the mercantile business of the block's namesakes. This building was the former location of the "Hargrave & Sissons" mercantile business

and was developed by James Hargrave . Like many young men of the time, Hargrave, recognizing Medicine Hat's economic potential, left his position as a clerk and accountant with the Hudson's Bay Company in Winnipeg and traveled west to the newly opening prairie. Arriving in Medicine Hat in 1883, and following a brief visit to Calgary, he chose to establish a mercantile business in Medicine Hat. Hargrave, in partnership with his brother-in-law Daniel Sissons, opened the first "Hargrave & Sissons" store in a tent shortly after arriving in Medicine Hat. Economic prosperity and increased demand for goods due to the influx of immigrants to the City quickly necessitated the construction of a larger store. In 1884, the pair constructed a one and one-half storey wooden-frame structure fronting South Railway Street on the site of the extant building. A wooden-frame warehouse was also constructed to the rear of the store to hold surplus goods. Around the time the wooden-frame building was constructed, the partnership also opened a store in Fort Carlton (1884-1898), run by Daniel Sissons. Sissons would barge goods from Medicine Hat to sell at the Fort Carlton store. In addition to their mercantile business, Hargrave and Sissons expanded their interests into ranching and real estate. The Merchants Bank of Canada and the extant two-storey commercial block represent their earliest real estate ventures. The Hargrave Sissons block was constructed in 1901, and although their partnership had been dissolved (1899) the same year Daniel Sissons passes away, the structure was known as the Hargrave Sissons block. When it first opened the tenant was J. K. Drinnan who opened a grocery on the main floor. The second floor was divided into office space with the first tenant being an artist and a dentist. The block was constructed at the start of the Edwardian Era boom and its size and construction materials reflected not only the economic prosperity of Hargrave and Sissons, but also that of the City of Medicine Hat. This prosperity is reiterated in the expansion of the building in 1909 through the construction of a one-storey Annex, to the southwest of the two-storey building. The block remained in its original form into the 1930s when, to accommodate the evolving needs of the business community, the main floor of the two-storey block was divided into four shops each with their own street access.

The Hargrave Sissons Block and Annex are valued as elegant and early examples of Edwardian commercial architecture in Medicine Hat constructed using locally sourced materials. The extant building is one of the earliest masonry commercial blocks constructed in the City of Medicine Hat. The Charles Purmal brickyard provided the red pressed brick and A. P. Burns provided the locally sourced sandstone for the commercial block. Its original design is representative of commercial Edwardian architecture as demonstrated through its full-height storefront with transom, chamfered corner entry, brick pilasters capped with sandstone, sandstone quoining, and corbelled brick panels below the corbelled brick parapet. The scale, design, and construction materials of this early Edwardian-era building anchor the building to the street and project a sense of stability and permanency. Its location opposite the railway tracks and on the City's historic main street would have had a strong impression on visitors arriving in the City. The Annex was designed and constructed by A. E. Forester in 1909 and reflects the evolving nature of the building as it strived to meet the needs of Medicine Hat's commercial businesses. The one-storey block with red pressed brick and full-height storefront is modest in comparison to the Hargrave Sissons Block. Both structures play a pivotal role in the history of the development of Medicine Hat and as such were designated Municipal Heritage Resources in 2012.

The Hargrave Sissons Block and Annex are further recognized as landmarks in Medicine Hat's historic downtown core. Its prominent siting on the corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street SE and South Railway Street and its substantial masonry construction are early and identifiable examples of Edwardian commercial architecture.

### **Character-Defining Elements**

The key elements that define the heritage character of the Hargrave Sissons Block and Annex include, but are not limited to its:

- location on the corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street SE and South Railway Street in the commercial centre of Medicine Hat, with minimal setback from the street; and
- connection with surrounding commercial buildings of a similar age and construction.

### Hargrave Sissons Block

- form, scale, and massing as expressed by its: two-storey height; rectangular plan; flat roof with flat parapet on the street façades;
- masonry construction including: red brick with grey mortar; sandstone watertable, pilaster caps, quoining, sills and lintels; internal red brick chimney;
- Commercial Edwardian style details such as: simplicity of form; multiple bays separated by sandstone and brick pilasters capped with carved sandstone; full-height storefront with recessed entries; chamfered corner entry; corbelled decorative brick panels below a corbelled brick parapet; corbelled brick cornice at some storefronts;
- window fenestration such as: single assembly 1-over-1 single-hung wooden-sash windows; large storefront windows with full-width transom; sandstone sills and lintels; single doors with transom to access second floor; and
- interior features such as gas fittings on the second floor.

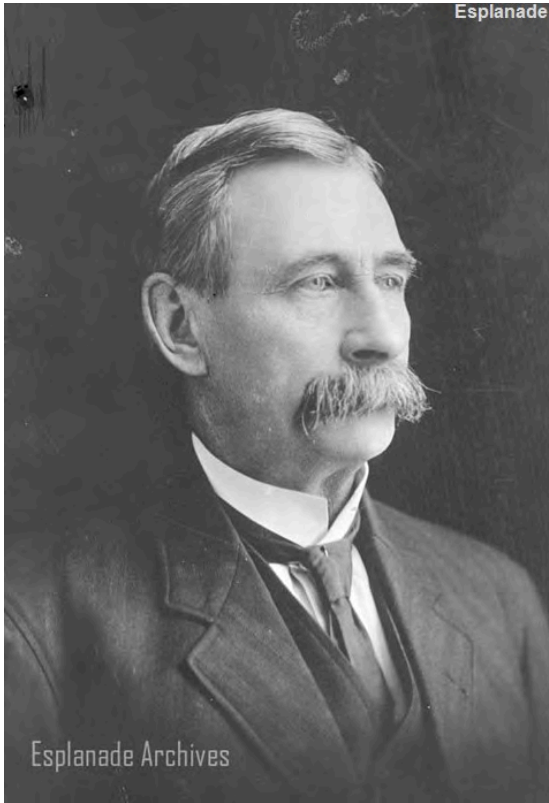
### Annex

- form, scale, and massing as expressed by its one-storey height, rectangular plan, flat roof with flat parapet on the street facade;
- masonry construction including: red brick with grey mortar; sandstone watertable;
- Commercial Edwardian style details such as: simplicity of form; full-height storefront; flat brick parapet; and
- window fenestration such as: large storefront windows with transom.

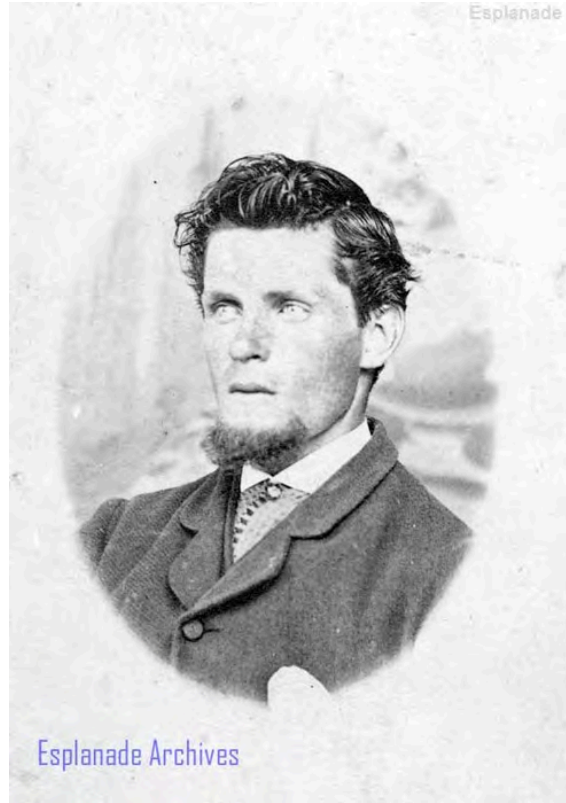
### Historic Images



Hargrave & Sissons' wooden-frame store facing South Railway Street, circa 1887 (far right) (Esplanade Archives)



James Hargrave, circa 1900s (Esplanade Archives)



Daniel Sissons, circa 1868 (Esplanade Archives)



Hargrave-Sissons Block, circa 1901 (Esplanade Archives)





Hargrave-Sissons Block, circa 1930 (Esplanade Archives)



Hargrave-Sissons Block (far right), circa 1940s (Esplanade Archives)



Annex between Hargrave Sissons Block and Merchants Bank of Canada, circa 1910 (Esplanade Archives)



Annex between Hargrave Sissons Block and Merchants Bank of Canada, unknown date (Esplanade Archives)



**Current Images**



North façade of Hargrave Sissons Block and Annex, June 2015 (DLA)



Storefronts in structural bays on north façade. Far right storefront is the block's most original, June 2015 (DLA)





Entry to second floor of commercial block with one-storey annex to the west, June 2015 (DLA).



East façade of Hargrave-Sissons Block, June 2015 (DLA)





Sandstone quoining, sills, lintels, and pilaster cap of commercial block and painted west wall, June 2015 (DLA)



Deteriorated sandstone water table with mortar loss, and damaged parging on brick stoop, June 2015 (DLA)





Cracked sandstone lintel, mortar loss, settlement issues at work, June 2015 (DLA)



Decorative corbelled brick panel below corbelled brick parapet with metal cap flashing, June 2015 (DLA)





Chamfered entry with deteriorated sandstone watertable, replaced transom, covered sidelights, and replaced door, June 2015 (DLA).



Single assembly, 1-over-1 single-hung wooden-sash windows on second storey, June 2015 (DLA)





Brick façade with MHR plaque and showing both sandstone deterioration and results of paint removal from brick, June 2015 (DLA)

#### Statement of Integrity

<b>Property Name &amp; Address</b>	Hargrave and Sissons Block and Annex 667, 669, and 675 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street SE
<b>Value Summary</b>	<p>This site is significant because.....</p> <p><b>Theme/Activity/Cultural Practice/ Event</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  The Hargrave Sissons Block and Annex, built in 1901 and 1909 respectively, is valued as representative of the impressive period of economic development and construction at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the City of Medicine Hat <b>(Theme Value-Managing Growth in Medicine Hat)</b>.</p> <p><b>Institution/Person</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><b>Design/Style/Construction</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  The Hargrave Sissons Block and Annex are valued as elegant and early examples of Edwardian commercial architecture in Medicine Hat constructed using local source materials <b>(Theme Value: Built in Medicine Hat)</b>.</p> <p><b>Information Potential</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><b>Landmark/Symbolic Value</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  The Hargrave Sissons Block and Annex are further recognized as landmarks in Medicine Hat's historic downtown core.</p>

<b>Period of Significance</b>	1885 – 1905 Railway/Age of Early Settlement
<b>Chronology of Alterations</b>	<p>1901 Portions of wooden-frame Hargrave and Sissons store torn down and/or moved outside town limits</p> <p>1909 Addition – one-storey red brick</p> <p>circa 1930s first floor exterior painted</p> <p>1931 Main floor divided into four units each with street access</p> <p>1949 New front (no further description)</p> <p>1961 Renovations</p> <p>1962 Interior repairs</p> <p>1963 Interior renovation</p> <p>1968 Partition walls</p> <p>1979 Interior renovations to main floor and second floor</p> <p>2002 Interior renovations</p> <p>2006 Interior renovations</p> <p>2012 Paint removed from exterior of building</p>
<b>Aspects of Integrity</b>	<p><b>Location</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The location of the commercial block and annex has not been altered.</p> <p><b>Design</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The overall design of the buildings has been maintained.</p> <p><b>Environment</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The buildings continue to be situated in Medicine Hat's historic commercial downtown.</p> <p><b>Materials</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The buildings' original historic fabric is intact; however the storefronts have been altered, and paint applied and stripped from the street façades.</p> <p><b>Workmanship</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The high quality of the workmanship of the buildings is evident in its current condition.</p> <p><b>Feeling</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The buildings continue to convey a strong historical aesthetic.</p> <p><b>Association</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The buildings continue to be used for commercial business.</p>
<b>Statement of Integrity</b>	<p>The <u>Hargrave Sissons Block and Annex</u> maintain all the aspects of integrity necessary for it to convey its significance/heritage value.</p> <p>Overall, the Hargrave Sissons Block and Annex are in good condition with much of their original design and historic fabric intact. The two buildings' form, scale, and massing have been maintained.</p> <p><b>Hargrave Sissons Block</b> The masonry construction is in fair condition with deterioration most frequently present on the sandstone. The sandstone watertable, pilaster caps, sills, and lintels exhibit the most severe deterioration. Cracks and delamination are present throughout the building's sandstone units.</p>



	<p>Coving typically due to wind, de-icing salts, mechanical damage, and moisture saturation has significantly deteriorated the sandstone base of the pilasters and watertable. A mason experienced in historic building should be engaged to determine the extent of the deterioration and if measures can be undertaken to stabilize and or rehabilitate the existing sandstone or if units require complete replacement. Localized mortar loss is also present which should also be assessed and rehabilitation is required repointing is completed using a mortar of similar strength, colour, and joint profile as the original. The entire masonry exterior of the building was painted first in the 1930s and repeatedly since then. In 2012 the paint was partially removed from the building with varying degrees of success. If further paint stripping is undertaken, the process chosen should not be damaging to the masonry or mortar and test patches should be preformed prior to proceeding with the work. The chamfered front entry and storefronts on both the east and north façades of the building have been altered since first constructed with the exception of the western most storefront on the north façade. The other storefronts reflect alterations made to the building in the 1930s. Overall, the arrangement of a transom above a full-height storefront has been maintained and is reflective of the original design of the block. The storefront is in good condition and appears to have been recently painted. There is no evidence of paint failure on the storefront. The chamfered corner entry is original to the building although the configuration of the door and sidelights has been changed. The original door at the time of the block was built was a double door with large upper glass panel and transom above. In the 1930s, likely when the main floor was split into multiple units, the double door was replaced with a single door with large glass panel, sidelights, and multi-light transom, below the original transom. Presently, the existing door is a replacement, the sidelights have been covered, and the multi-light transom replaced with a single light. Originally, four steps were climbed to access the store. These steps have been removed, likely during the 1930s renovations. The entries to the second floor on the east and north façade appear to have retained their original configuration. The north façade is composed of a transom with single man door below with the extant door is a replacement. The east façade entry consists of two-stacked transoms with a single man door. The three panel wooden door with multi-light upper panel and hardware is of early form and may be original to the building. Parging on the brick stoops of the second floor entries is also failing and requires rehabilitation. The single assembly single-hung wooden-sash 1-over-1 windows on the second floor are original to the building. They are in varying degrees of deterioration and require rehabilitation. The original wooden-sash storm window have been are no longer present. Metal cap flashing has been installed on top of the parapet to prevent its deterioration and water penetrating between the wythes of brick.</p> <p><b>Annex</b></p> <p>The one-storey red pressed brick building is in fair condition with aspects of its original design intact. Its original form, scale, and massing have not been altered. The brick and sandstone exterior is original; however, similar to the adjacent commercial block, the brick was painted and has efforts have been made to remove the paint from brick. The sandstone water table is in fair condition with minor evidence of deterioration. The original</p>
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	parapet pediment with stone cap has been removed and the storefront reconfigured to accommodate both an entry and storefront window. Modifications to the structure have impact the ability to read this building.
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	Site Number	Category A
	Community District Downtown	
	Designation Municipal Historic Resources	

<b>Site Name(s):</b> Hargrave Sissons Block and Annex			
<b>Municipal Address:</b> 667, 669, and 675 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street SE		Date of Construction:	1901 1909
<b>Consultant(s):</b> Donald Luxton & Associates Inc.		Evaluation Date:	Y 15 M 06 D 23
<b>Heritage Committee:</b> Heritage Resources Committee			
<b>Heritage Planner:</b>			
			TOTAL
			82

History (H)	E	VG	G	F	P	(H) SCORE
H.1 Associations/Patterns	X					40
H.2 Age	X					20
Comments: H.1 The Hargrave Sissons Block and Annex represent some of the earliest commercial blocks in Medicine Hat and reflect an economic boom in the City during the Edwardian era. Significant as a physical link to early settler families the Hargraves and Sissons. H.2 Constructed in 1901 and 1909 (Annex).						

Architecture (A)	E	VG	G	F	P	(A) SCORE
A.1 Style/Type/Design		X				20
A.2 Designer/Builder					X	0
A.3 Construction Technology		X				10
A.4 Interior Details				X		2
A.5 Alterations			X			-10
Comments: A.1 Commercial block early example of Edwardian commercial architecture. The annex, although altered maintains aspects of Edwardian commercial architecture. A.2 Engineer – Joseph unknown, Contractor: Unknown. A.3 Load bearing masonry construction with sandstone elements. A.4 Some gas fittings retained on second floor. A.5 Paint applied to exterior. Storefronts altered during 1930s. Front entry altered.						

Urban Context (C)	E	VG	G	F	P	(C) SCORE
C.1 Landmark/Character		X				10
C.2 Streetscape/Landscape		X				10
Comments: C.1 The commercial block and annex are a highly recognizable resource in the City of Medicine Hat. C.2 The block and annex contribute to the historic aesthetic of the street and downtown core.						