

Becker Cocks Residence



Date of Construction	1904
Address	210 - 1 (Esplanade) Street SE
Original Owner	Richard C. Becker
Architect	George G. Kerr
Contractor	Edward D. Bentley
Neighbourhood	Downtown
Legal	47748;A;4,5

Description of Historic Place

The Becker Cocks residence is a large two-and-one-half storey residence situated on the north side of 1st Street SE between 2nd Avenue SE and 3rd Avenue SE, west of Medicine Hat's downtown core. The residence is set back from the street behind a moulded concrete block wall, and is partially obscured by mature landscaping. This historic resource is identifiable by its red brick exterior with decorative stringcourses, segmental arched windows on the second storey, multi-pitched roof with gables and gabled dormer, and metal roof cresting.

Heritage Value of Historic Place

This historic resource, constructed in 1904, is significant for its connection to long-term owners and Medicine Hat pioneers, the Becker Family. It was constructed in the early stage of the city's Edwardian boom period, during which time the city built upon earlier development activities that included real estate speculation, resource exploitation, establishment of manufacturing companies,

and railway expansion. Richard Cecil Becker (1867-1943), originally from Guelph, Ontario, had a long-term career with the CPR as a train conductor. Becker arrived in Medicine Hat in 1887 along with his wife, Jean Becker, whom he had married in Winnipeg. In 1904 they constructed this grand residence, which originally included a barn at the rear, for the sum of \$7,000. Becker was a key figure in the Medicine Hat community, serving on the Library Board, the Hospital Board, and belonging to such associations as the Freemasons and the Shriners. Additionally Becker was active in local politics and was appointed to City Council in 1916. The Becker's had one son, Charles, and two daughters, Ruth Hughes and Phyllis Becker. Following the passing of Richard in 1943 and Jean in 1953, daughters Phyllis and Ruth, who worked as superintendents of children's recreation for the City of Medicine Hat Parks Department, retained ownership of the house until 1965.

The Becker Cocks Residence is additionally valued as an important example of Medicine Hat's diverse architectural expressions. The

grand house features elements of both the Queen Anne Revival-style and the Edwardian Classical-style, demonstrating a hybrid of two popular architectural styles. Hallmark features of the Queen Anne Revival-style include metal roof cresting, multi-pitched roofline with gables, sunburst triangular pediment, articulation of surface patterning with contrasting shingle patterns in the gable ends, and tall, red brick corbelled chimney. Edwardian Classical-style details are evident in the decorative stringcourse spanning the second storey and segmental arched windows. Designed by local architect George G. Kerr, and built by carpenter Edward D. Bentley, the residence represents the quality of local builders and locally manufactured materials made available during the early Edwardian era boom period. Sub-contractors included Daniel T. Flavin of the Medicine Hat Plumbing & Heating Co. and Peard & Worthy, mason contractors. Originally the house featured a full-width verandah supported by columns, but this has since been enclosed.

Prominently located on the tree-lined historic 1st Street SE, the residence is valued as a highly visible landmark in the Medicine Hat community with distinctive architectural and landscape features.

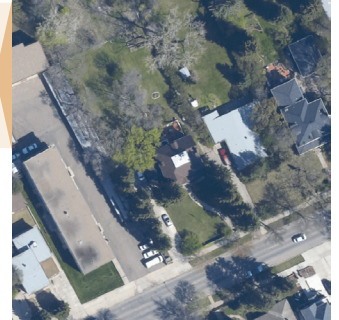
The Becker Cocks Residence as it appeared circa 1913



Character-Defining Elements - Becker Cocks Residence (210 - 1 Street SE)



- Prominent location on the north side of 1 Street SE (formally Esplanade Street) in Medicine Hat



- Original placement and siting on a tree-lined historic residential neighbourhood on 1st Street SE



- Original landscape features such as: expansive grassed lot with mature trees; low moulded concrete block wall at the front



- Masonry construction with quality materials including: locally manufactured red brick with red mortar; parged window sills; poured concrete and rough course-stone foundation; exterior chimney with corbelling; sandstone sills



- Form, scale, and massing as expressed by its: two and one-half storey height; full-height basement; square plan; multi-pitched roofline with multiple gables; one-storey addition with hipped-roof on west elevation



- Elements of the Queen Anne Revival-style such as: tall corbelled brick chimney; patterned wooden shingles in gable ends; sunburst design in pediment; metal roof cresting



- Edwardian Classical Revival-style details such as: decorative brick stringcourse, segmental arched windows in the second storey



- Original windows such as: single assembly, 1-over-1 single-hung wooden-sash windows; single assembly 1-over-1 single-hung wooden-sash segmental arched windows with exterior wooden storms; 2-over-2 single-hung wooden-sash windows at rear; arched window at rear of house with leaded glass



- Original doors such as: double entry wood paneled doors with single light at entryway



- Original interior features including: maple floors; gas fireplace; radiators; wooden trim; wooden paneled doors with original hardware

Statement of Integrity - Becker Cocks Residence (210 - 1 Street SE)

Applicable Significance Criteria

This site is significant because...

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

Institution / Person ☒ Yes ☐ No

-This Becker Cocks Residence, constructed in 1904, is significant for its connection to long-term owners and Medicine Hat pioneers, the Becker family (**Theme Value – Oasis in the Prairies: Settling Medicine Hat**).

Design / Style / Construction ☒ Yes ☐ No

-The Becker Cocks Residence is additionally valued as an important example of Medicine Hat's diverse and eclectic architectural expression. The grand house features elements of the Queen Anne Revival-style and Edwardian Classical-style, demonstrating a hybrid of these popular architectural styles (**Theme Value – Built in Medicine Hat**).

Information Potential ☐ Yes ☒ No

Landmark / Symbolic Value ☒ Yes ☐ No

-Prominently located on the tree-lined historic 1st Street SE, the residence is valued as a highly visible landmark in the Medicine Hat community with distinctive architectural and landscape features (**Landmark Value**).

Period of Significance

1885 to 1905 Railway/Early Settlement

Chronology of Alterations

1950s - Verandah enclosed with brick and house triplexed in interior by Ruth and Phyllis; addition on west added

1980s - Interior renovation of kitchen and bathrooms; triplex removed; windows replaced on 3rd floor;
2004 - Wooden soffits replaced; roof replaced

Aspects of Integrity

LOCATION ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable

The location of the residence has not been changed.

DESIGN ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable

The design of the building has been retained apart from the infill of the front verandah.

ENVIRONMENT ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable

The building continues to be situated in a residential neighbourhood on 1st Street SE.

MATERIALS ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable

The authenticity of the materials is evident on the residence.

WORKMANSHIP ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable

The high quality of the workmanship of the building is identifiable through its use of materials and current condition.

FEELING ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable

The feeling of the building has not been altered. It conveys a grand historical aesthetic.

ASSOCIATION ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable

The association of the building is unchanged.

Statement of Integrity continued on next page...

Statement of Integrity - Becker Cocks Residence (210 - 1 Street SE)

Statement of Integrity

Becker Cocks Residence maintains all the aspects of integrity necessary for it to convey its significance / heritage value.

The Becker Cocks Residence is in excellent condition for its nearly 110 year age. There is minor cracking of mortar in some location and some windows have been replaced, but otherwise it is in near original condition. The biggest change to the residence is with its front verandah, which was infilled by Ruth Hughes and Phyllis Becker sometime in the 1950s. The verandah was infilled with brick that is distinguishable from the original brick on either side of a recessed front door. A small one-storey addition was added on the west side that also fits in with the original design of the house. The house was triplexed in the 1950s and the original internal staircase was removed. The current owner removed the demarcations in the 1980s and added a new interior staircase. The kitchen and bathrooms were updated at this time as well. The soffits and roof were replaced with modern materials in 2004.

The property also contained a small barn, which was demolished.


Additional Images - Becker Cocks Residence

Ruins of the wooden barn that once existed at the rear of the Becker Cocks Residence. It was built at the same time as the residence by the contractor Edward D. Bentley

Donald Luxton & Associates
June 2013



Heritage Evaluation Form - Becker Cocks Residence (210 - 1 Street SE)

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

Site Name(s): Becker Cocks Residence			
Municipal Address: 201 - 1 Street SE		Date of Construction:	Y 1904
Consultant(s): Donald Luxton & Associates Inc.		Evaluation Date:	Y 13 M 05 D 17
Heritage Committee: Heritage Resource Committee			
Heritage Planner: Chris Reddy			
		Total	
		86	

History (H)	E	VG	G	F	P		(H) SCORE
H.1 Associations/Patterns	X					40	40
H.2 Age	X					20	
Comments: H.1 This historic resource is significant for its connection to long-term owners and Medicine Hat pioneers, the Becker Family. H.2 Constructed in 1904.							

Architecture (A)	E	VG	G	F	P		(A) SCORE
A.1 Style/Type/Design		X				20	26
A.2 Designer/Builder				X		3	
A.3 Construction Technology			X			5	
A.4 Interior Details		X				8	
A.5 Alterations			X			-10	
Comments: A.1 The Becker Cocks Residence is an important example of Medicine Hat's diverse and eclectic architectural expression, featuring elements of both the Queen Anne Revival-style and Edwardian Classical-style. A.2 Architect – G. Kerr, Contractor – Edward D. Bentley A.3 Masonry construction A.4 Interior elements including maple floors, wooden-trim, wooden-panels, wooden-doors with original hardware. A.5 Enclosed front verandah and one-storey addition to the west side of the residence.							

Urban Context (C)	E	VG	G	F	P		(C) SCORE
C.1 Landmark/Character		X				10	20
C.2 Streetscape/Landscape		X				10	
Comments: C.1 The residence's siting, substantial lot with mature trees, and overall refined form make it a highly identifiable resource. C.2 The residence is a component of a grouping of early residence, which lends itself to the historic aesthetic of the neighbourhood.							