

View Court Apartments



Date of Construction	1912
Address	420 Aberdeen (Braemar) Street SE
Original Owner	Jón T. Bergman
Architect	Jón T. Bergman
Contractor	Jón T. Bergman
Neighbourhood	SE Hill
Legal	61685;61;3,4

Description of Historic Place

View Court Apartments is a grand three-storey apartment block situated on the north side of Aberdeen Street SE between 4th and 5th Avenues SE in Medicine Hat's Downtown/ SE Hill neighbourhood. The building is characterised by its dual curved front façade, high quality red pressed brick exterior, moulded tin cornice with modillions, two-storey portico with brick columns and open balustrade on the front façade, regular fenestration, and three-storey full-width hipped-roof verandah on the rear façade.

Heritage Value of Historic Place

Constructed during the height of Medicine Hat's pre-First World War real estate boom in 1912, View Court Apartments is valued as an impressive example of the surge of development that occurred outside the city's downtown core during the late-Edwardian period. Much of the development transforming Medicine Hat at that time involved the construction of single-family houses, commercial buildings,

and industrial landscapes. Large-scale multi-occupant residential buildings were rare, and their emergence in the real estate market reflected the growing need to provide housing alternatives for the city's expanding population. View Court Apartments was one of the earliest apartment blocks constructed in the city. Its positioning in a residential neighbourhood near the downtown core with nearby community commercial buildings also reflects a changing pattern of development in Medicine Hat. Previously, apartment-style residences were typically found on the upper floors of downtown commercial buildings. However, as the economy boomed, the demand for housing pushed people beyond the downtown core and apartment blocks were a means of providing high occupancy density in close proximity to downtown Medicine Hat. Its prominent siting, substantial size, brick construction, and sheet metal detailing reflect the optimism and rapid growth of the Edwardian era. Multi-occupant residential buildings, as such View Court Apartments, contributed greatly to the economic vitality of a developing neighbourhood.

View Court Apartments is also valued for its connection with prominent Medicine Hat real estate developer, designer, and entrepreneur, J.T. Bergman. Bergman, originally a resident of Winnipeg, travelled to Medicine Hat with the intention of taking advantage of the city's Edwardian real estate boom. Having constructed a number of apartment blocks and commercial buildings in Winnipeg, View Court Apartments was his first real estate venture in Medicine Hat. Designed by Bergman and constructed in 1912 for \$65,000, View Court Apartments was comprised of 28 suites, each with a private bath, which could be rented for \$20 to \$25 per month. The presence of en-suite bathrooms reflects the evolution of apartment building construction at the time, as most earlier apartment blocks had communal washrooms. In addition to View Court Apartments, Bergman also constructed Diana Court, which is situated on Aberdeen Street, prior to the First World War. Although Medicine Hat was originally a place of real estate investment for Bergman, in 1917, he moved to the city with his wife and family, residing at Diana Court (No. 7) and then View

Court (No. 12) until the early 1930s. Bergman remained in Medicine Hat until his death in 1941.

View Court Apartments is significant as a rare and elegantly detailed example of a Classical Revival-style apartment building outside Medicine Hat's downtown core. The Classical Revival-style was fuelled by an improved understanding of Greek and Roman building construction, attained through the study of archaeology. Classical Revival architecture featured clean and unassuming ornamentation, which stood in stark contrast to the extravagance of the earlier Victorian era. View Court Apartments' three-storey massing, plain form, and unadorned pressed red brick exterior reflect this architectural style. The decorative elements are limited to the front façade or public view-scape of the building, including its corbelled pressed-tin cornice with modillions and two-storey portico with balconies. New to this period was the introduction of bays as an architectural feature; View Court Apartments possesses two multi-storey bay projections on either side of the front entry. The rear façade of the building is dominated by a three-story hipped-roof verandah, which provided residents with outdoor space and a secondary exit. The mass and design of apartment building restricted the ability for natural light to penetrate interior rooms, and as a result of this design, two light-wells were included in the View Court Apartments. Windows, arranged in single and double assembly with simple lintels and sills, permitted light to penetrate living spaces along the exterior walls of the building. The craftsmanship and detailing of the apartment block make is an excellent example of Classical Revival architecture.

Jón T. Bergman

Image courtesy of Cambridge Investments Ltd., Medicine Hat, Alberta.



Character-Defining Elements - View Court Apartments (420 Aberdeen Street SE)



- Location on the north side of Aberdeen Street SE between 4th Avenue SE and 5th Avenue SE in Medicine Hat's Downtown/SE Hill neighbourhood



- Form, scale, and massing as expressed by its: three-storey height with full-height basement; rectangular plan; flat roof



- Masonry construction including: concrete foundation; stretcher pattern pressed red brick exterior with red mortar; internal brick chimney



- Classical Revival-style details such as: clean form; moulded tin roof cornice with modillions; curved front façade; two-storey portico with open balustrade and brick columns



- Window fenestration such as: single and double assembly 1-over-1 single-hung wooden-sash windows with matching storms with painted sills and lintels; 1-over-1 single-hung wooden-sash windows at the light-well



- Additional elements including: three-storey hipped-roof verandah with open balustrade on the rear façade; two interior light/ventilation wells

- Interior features such as: wide hallways with high ceilings; cast iron radiators; and wooden floors, trim, and plate rail



Statement of Integrity - View Court Apartments (420 Aberdeen Street SE)

Applicable Significance Criteria

This site is significant because...

Theme / Activity / Cultural Practice / Event



Yes



No

-Constructed during the height of the pre-First World War real estate boom, View Court Apartments is valued as a reflection of the surge of development that occurred outside Medicine Hat's downtown core during the Edwardian era (**Theme Value - Managing Growth in Medicine Hat**).

Institution / Person



Yes



No

-View Court Apartments is also valued for its connection with prominent Medicine Hat real estate developer and entrepreneur, J.T. Bergman, and represents his first real estate venture in Medicine Hat (**Theme Value - City Development in Medicine Hat**).

Design / Style / Construction



Yes



No

-View Court Apartments is significant as an elegant and rare example of a Classical Revival-style apartment building outside Medicine Hat's downtown core (**Theme Value - Built in Medicine Hat**).

Information Potential



Yes



No

Landmark / Symbolic Value



Yes



No

Period of Significance

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

Chronology of Alterations

Post 1950s - Rear verandah replaced

Aspects of Integrity

LOCATION



Yes



No



Not Applicable

The location of the building has not been altered.

DESIGN



Yes



No



Not Applicable

The design of the building and detailing has been maintained.

ENVIRONMENT



Yes



No



Not Applicable

The building continues to be situated in a residential neighbourhood outside Medicine Hat's downtown core.

MATERIALS



Yes



No



Not Applicable

The authentic materials of the building have been maintained.

WORKMANSHIP



Yes



No



Not Applicable

The high quality of the workmanship of the building is clearly evident.

FEELING



Yes



No



Not Applicable

The building continues to project an elegant historical aesthetic.

ASSOCIATION



Yes



No



Not Applicable

The association of the building has not changed – it continues to function as an apartment building.

Statement of Integrity continued on next page...

Statement of Integrity - View Court Apartments (420 Aberdeen Street SE)

Statement of Integrity

View Court Apartments maintains all the aspects of integrity necessary for it to convey its significance / heritage value.

View Court Apartments is a well-maintained historic resource with a high degree of original fabric intact. The brick exterior is in fair condition with evidence of mortar loss primarily on the rear façade and the brick columns of the portico. Efflorescence on the lower brick courses on the front and side façades indicates moisture penetration issues, which should be investigated further. Past mortar and brick repairs have been completed at a number of locations on the building and have not always been completed in a sympathetic manner to the building. The parging on the window lintels and sills is cracked and failing at a number of locations. The slope of the concrete sidewalk and its placement abutting the front façade of the building permits water to drain towards the building rather than away, thus potentially infiltrating the building. Numerous locations on the brick façade exhibit staining where two different materials meet. The two-storey portico with open balustrade is intact and original to the building. The fascia of the second storey portico balcony is water-damaged and should be further examined to determine its extent. A number of the original 1-over-1 single-hung wooden-sash windows and wooden storms have been replaced with aluminum windows. The tin cornice is in fair condition; however, areas of the cornice have begun to fail, specifically at junctions between curved and straight portions, which permit pests and water to penetrate the building. The three-storey hipped-roof verandah on the rear of the building has been altered to adhere to the current building code; however, its original form and massing has been maintained.


Additional Images - View Court Apartments

View Court Apartments in context with the surrounding residential and commercial properties in the community. Hall Block on the right

Donald Luxton & Associates
June 2013



Heritage Evaluation Form - View Court Apartments (420 Aberdeen Street SE)

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

Site Name(s): View Court Apartments			
Municipal Address: 420 Aberdeen Street SE		Date of Construction:	Y 1912
Consultant(s): Donald Luxton & Associates Inc.		Evaluation Date:	Y 13 M 05 D 16
Heritage Committee: Heritage Resource Committee			
Heritage Planner: Chris Reddy			
		Total	
		84	

History (H)	E	VG	G	F	P		(H) SCORE
H.1 Associations/Patterns		X				20	30
H.2 Age		X				10	
Comments: H.1 Constructed during the height of the pre-First World War real estate boom, View Court Apartments is valued as an impressive example of the surge of development that occurred outside Medicine Hat's downtown core during the late-Edwardian period. H.2 Constructed in 1912.							

Architecture (A)	E	VG	G	F	P		(A) SCORE
A.1 Style/Type/Design		X				20	34
A.2 Designer/Builder		X				10	
A.3 Construction Technology			X			5	
A.4 Interior Details			X			4	
A.5 Alterations		X				-5	
Comments: A.1 View Court Apartments is significant as a rare and elegantly detailed example of a Classical Revival-style apartment building outside Medicine Hat's downtown core. A.2 Architect – J.T. Bergman, Contractor – J.T. Bergman A.3 Building constructed using red pressed brick. A.4 Original interior elements including high ceilings, wooden floors, trim, plate rail. A.5 A number of wooden-sash windows have been replaced.							

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 apartment building's prominent siting and architectural detailing make it a highly visible landmark in the residential neighbourhood. C.2 The building's historic aesthetic contributes to the surrounding streetscape.							