

# Richardson's Bakery



Date of Construction	1899
Address	720 - 4 (Montreal) Street SE
Original Owner	Henry McNeely
Neighbourhood	River Flats
Legal	1491;24;11

## Description of Historic Place

Richardson's Bakery is a one and one-half storey wooden-frame historic building with a front-gabled roofline and a one-storey commercial storefront extension on the east side of the building. Accented with drop wooden siding and a full-width wooden storefront with a parapet roof and an awning, the building is situated prominently on 4th Street SE between North Railway Street and Maple Avenue SE in the neighbourhood of River Flats. A large gabled addition with stucco cladding is situated at the rear of the building.

## Heritage Value of Historic Place

Constructed in 1899, Richardson's Bakery is highly valued as an early representative of the commercial development established to support the mainly working class district in Medicine Hat's River Flats neighbourhood. River Flats housed the majority of the city's local industries, spurred by access to the national rail line, the presence of high quality clay sources, and inexpensive gas sources. While much of the

development transforming the area involved the construction of modest single-family houses, there was also a need for commercial services. Commercial development in the River Flats neighbourhood was concentrated on North Railway Street, in proximity to the CPR Railway Station. Richardson's Bakery represents one of the earliest commercial developments in the neighbourhood. Henry McNeely (1862-1944) purchased the property and constructed the building in 1899. He built the house to the property lines in order to improve its visibility in the area. The commercial space was located on the main floor, with a living space above. The original building is distinctly utilitarian with minimal ornamentation, identifiable by its front-gabled, one and one-half storey wooden-frame form and scale and original 2-over-2 wooden-sash single-hung windows at the front façade. The modest scale of the building reflects the rising optimism and growth in Medicine Hat in the late Victorian to early Edwardian period.

Richardson's Bakery is further valued as a long running and multi-generational bakery, and for its various phases of ownership and

subsequent construction, which illustrates the evolution of the building over time, and the need for expansion to suit its occupants. After he constructed the building in 1899, Henry McNeely operated a bakery from the premises for a brief period of time before choosing to lease out the bakery starting in early 1900. W. Wesley Cooper was the first tenant to occupy the building, managing a bakery at the turn of the century, before selling the business to Samuel and Sarah Harris, who renamed the shop "The Excelsior Bakery." Following the death of Samuel in March 1901, Sarah continued "The Excelsior Bakery" but from her residence on North Railway Street. Richard Reeves, a baker previously employed by Harris, secured the lease from McNeely to operate his own bakery at 720 4th Street SE, which he did until 1906. In 1909, a brick addition was added to the rear of the building, designed and built by William Ledrew, who at that time was the building's resident baker. By the early 1910s, the building had moved on to Milton B. and George W. Tassie to establish their own bakery business – Tassie Brothers - at 720 4th Street SE. The brothers' business operated from the premises until 1914, when, due to high demand, they constructed a larger bakery at 262 4th Street SW, and renamed their business the Alberta Bread Company.

Richardson's Bakery is further significant for its association with the Richardson family, a renowned Medicine Hat family and long-time owners of what became Richardson's Bakery. John Bryden (J.B.) Richardson (1856-1938) and his wife Margaret (nee Corbett) moved from Ontario to Medicine Hat in 1912. J.B. Richardson initially found employment as General Manager of McKinnon's Ltd. - a bakery operated by Felix B. McKinnon, son-in-law of Michael Leonard, who had established Medicine Hat's first bakery, The City Bakery, in June 1883. Leonard sold his business to McKinnon in 1905, which the latter maintained operation of until restructuring in 1912, at which time it was renamed McKinnon's Ltd. The

following year, McKinnon sold his business to J.B. Richardson. Richardson moved the bakery from the downtown core to a residence at 642 10th Street SE in what was known as the South Yuill neighbourhood. A fire at Richardson's 10th Street SE bakery in 1915 forced the business to relocate to Henry McNeely's property at 720 4th Street SE. At this location the Richardson's Bakery thrived, and in response, Richardson purchased the Alberta Bread Company's building at 262 4th Street SW and moved to the larger location in 1921. The Richardsons eventually sold their business to Five Roses Flour Mill in 1929. In 1934, B.B. Richardson, son of J.B. Richardson, and his wife, Isabella, decided to resurrect Richardson's Bakery. They purchased the old Henry McNeely property, at the time owned by Alex Milroy, and home to the Ideal Bakery, and re-opened Richardson's Bakery, 13 years after the original Richardson's Bakery had vacated the site. The Richardsons constructed several additions to the building including a larger front-gabled addition that extended to the rear property lines in 1944. Stucco cladding, visible today, was added to the building during this renovation. Baked goods were made in-house in large commercial gas ovens and were delivered via vans to stores, restaurants, and clubs throughout the city. Goods were also sold to local residents in the small commercial storefront. The thriving business was taken over by B.B.'s son Harold in 1955 and, subsequently, by Harold's son Ralph in 1980. The building remained in the Richardson family for over 50 years and was run by four generations of bakers. Presently, B & L Lawn and Home Maintenance operate from the premises, having purchased the property in 1998.

## Character-Defining Elements - Richardson's Bakery (720 - 4 Street SE)



- Prominent location on north side of 4th Street SE, between North Railway Avenue and Maple Avenue SE, with no setbacks from the road and lane situated on the west façade of the building



- Location within a commercial context in River Flats neighbourhood in the City of Medicine Hat



- Form, scale, and massing as expressed by its: one and one-half storey height of main building with front-gabled roofline with narrow overhanging eaves with closed soffits; one-storey addition with parapet wall on east side extending the storefront to the east; shed-roof over storefront; long rectangular addition attached on main building with front-gabled roofline



- Wooden-frame construction with concrete foundation on main building; drop wooden siding under newer drop wooden siding on main house; stucco siding on addition over original brick cladding; wooden trim and storefront



- Vernacular details of original building such as: bargeboards; cornerboards; fascia board; window trim; cornice board



- Original fenestration such as: single assembly 2-over-2 single-hung wooden-sash windows at front façade; large plate glass storefront windows; original location of front entryway door

- Additional exterior elements including: original placement of storefront sign at gable peak on main building



## Statement of Integrity - Richardson's Bakery (720 - 4 Street SE)

### Applicable Significance Criteria

*This site is significant because...*

**Theme / Activity / Cultural Practice / Event**  Yes  No

-Constructed in 1899, Richardson's Bakery, is highly valued as an early representation of the commercial development to support the mainly working class district in the River Flats neighbourhood in the City of Medicine Hat (**Theme Value – City Development in Medicine Hat**).

**Institution / Person**  Yes  No

-Richardson's Bakery is further significant for its association with the Richardson family, a renowned Medicine Hat family and long-time owners of Richardson's Bakery (**Theme Value – City Development in Medicine Hat**).

**Design / Style / Construction**  Yes  No

-Richardson's Bakery is further valued as a long-running and multi-generational bakery, and for its various phases of ownership and resulting construction, which illustrates the evolution of the building over time and need for expansion to suit its occupants (**Theme Value – Built in Medicine Hat**).

**Information Potential**  Yes  No

**Landmark / Symbolic Value**  Yes  No

### Period of Significance

1885 to 1905 Railway/Early Settlement

### Chronology of Alterations

1909 Small brick addition added to rear of main house.  
 c1913 Small shed-roof addition on east side of main house  
 1939 Alteration to building (unknown alteration)  
 1943 Alteration to building (unknown alteration)  
 1944 Addition to building – building extended to northern property lines  
 1959 Alterations

### Aspects of Integrity

**LOCATION**  Yes  No  Not Applicable

The location of the building and the zero set backs from the property line has not changed.

**DESIGN**  Yes  No  Not Applicable

The design as viewed from the streetscape has not changed. Alterations have occurred at the rear of the building and have not altered the original form, scale, and massing.

**ENVIRONMENT**  Yes  No  Not Applicable

The building continues to adhere to the commercial/residential environment of the area in the River Flats community.

**MATERIALS**  Yes  No  Not Applicable

Generally the building has retained much of its original form and massing and has retained some of its original materiality.

**WORKMANSHIP**  Yes  No  Not Applicable

The good workmanship of the building is expressed with the solidity of the original building's structure.

**FEELING**  Yes  No  Not Applicable

The feeling of the building has not altered. The building conveys a strong historical sense and has retained many elements that align with its long-time use as a bakery, including the wooden storefront.

**ASSOCIATION**  Yes  No  Not Applicable

The association of the building has not changed; it continues to be a privately owned commercial building, however it no longer functions as a bakery.

Statement of Integrity continued on next page...

## Statement of Integrity - Richardson's Bakery (720 - 4 Street SE)

### Statement of Integrity

*Richardson's Bakery maintains all the aspects of integrity necessary for it to convey its significance / heritage value.*

The original form, scale and massing are intact, with several original features including wooden windows and trim. A brick addition was added to the rear of the building in 1909; this addition was covered in stucco sometime in the 1930s. The building was covered in stucco in the 1930s when the Richardson family occupied the building again. The existing stucco is presumably a newer stucco as there were windows on the side addition of the building in a 1940s photograph of the building. Wooden drop siding was added to the building sometime in the last 10 years. The trim appears to be original but the windows originally had drip moulds, which have been removed, likely due to deterioration. A corbelled brick chimney has been replaced with a metal flue. Many of the wooden-sash windows on the sides of the house have been replaced with vinyl windows. The storefront appears to have been updated from its earlier configuration in 1930 with the addition of another larger storefront window on the east side of the building; this was originally marked with smaller awning windows.


## Additional Images - Richardson's Bakery

Employees of Richardson's Bakery standing out in front of the bakery and store. Henry McNeely's house can be seen adjacent to the bakery on the right

Esplanade Archives, Medicine Hat, Alberta.  
0110.0123.



## Heritage Evaluation Form - Richardson's Bakery (720 - 4 Street SE)

 <b>Medicine Hat</b> <b>The Gas City</b> <b>Heritage Evaluation Form</b>	Site Number	Category B
	Community District River Flats	
	Designation	

<b>Site Name(s):</b> Richardson's Bakery			
<b>Municipal Address:</b> 720 - 4 Street SE			Date of Construction: Y 1899
<b>Consultant(s):</b> Donald Luxton & Associates Inc. <b>Heritage Committee:</b> Heritage Resource Committee <b>Heritage Planner:</b> Chris Reddy			Evaluation Date: Y 13 M 05 D 16
			<b>Total</b>
			60

History (H)	E	VG	G	F	P	(H) SCORE
H.1 Associations/Patterns		X				20
H.2 Age	X					20

**Comments:** H.1 Richardson's Bakery is highly valued as an early representation of the commercial development to support the mainly working class district in the River Flats neighbourhood.  
H.2 Constructed in 1899.

Architecture (A)	E	VG	G	F	P	(A) SCORE
A.1 Style/Type/Design			X			10
A.2 Designer/Builder					X	0
A.3 Construction Technology					X	0
A.4 Interior Details					X	0
A.5 Alterations			X			-10

**Comments:** A.1 The building is a vernacular-style residence converted for commercial purposes.  
A.2 Unknown architect.  
A.3 Wooden-frame construction.  
A.4 Undetermined interior elements.  
A.5 Multiple early additions, exterior has been covered with stucco, a number of original wooden-sash windows replaced.

Urban Context (C)	E	VG	G	F	P	(C) SCORE
C.1 Landmark/Character		X				10
C.2 Streetscape/Landscape	X					15

**Comments:** C.1 The unique architectural style of the building makes it an identifiable neighbourhood landmark.  
C.2 The building's architecture varies from the surrounding streetscape.