

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Site Name: **RIVERSIDE SCHOOL**

Date of Construction: 1916 - 1917

Address: 201 – 2nd Street NW

Original Owners: Medicine Hat School Board

Architect: Walter Hargreaves Bourne (1916), James MacIntyre Stevenson (1950)

Contractors: Morton Fulton (1916), Bird Construction Co. (1950)

Neighbourhood: Riverside

Legal: 726M;3;1-10

Historic Legal:

ATS: 4;6;12;36;NE



Description of Historic Place

Riverside School is a two-storey red pressed brick building situated in Medicine Hat's Riverside neighbourhood. The Edwardian Classical-style school occupies an entire block on 2nd Street NW between 2nd Avenue NW and 3rd Avenue NW. The building, which is situated mid-block, possesses a large grassed yard with mature deciduous trees to its west and an outdoor ice rink to its east. Riverside School is identifiable through its front façade's symmetrical massing, regular arrangement of fenestration, banded brick pilasters resting on substantial molded concrete bases, recessed arched central entry with voussoir and decorative wooden entry cornice, and separate boys' and girls' entries on the side façades. A one-storey addition is connected to the building's rear façade.

Heritage Value of Historic Place

Riverside School, built in 1916 - 1917, is valued as an intact example of a historic Medicine Hat school constructed during the First World War as a component of a city-wide school building program initiated in 1909, and was the first brick public school constructed north of the South Saskatchewan River. Prior to the construction of schools north of the river, children crossed the railway bridge, and later Finlay Bridge,

to attend classes in one of Medicine Hat's public schools situated in the city's downtown core. As Medicine Hat grew and settlement expanded outwards from the downtown core, new subdivisions emerged. Development of the Riverside Park subdivision, situated across the river northwest of the city's centre, began in 1906, and within a month of initial offering, all available lots had been purchased. As the neighbourhood grew, the demand for local amenities, such as schools, also grew. To address the rapid influx of immigrants to Medicine Hat, the School Board granted contracts for the construction of a number of cottage schools in the city's more rapidly developing neighbourhoods, this included a contract to Percy Taylor for the construction of two cottage schools in Riverside for \$31,000. Riverside's cottage schools opened on September 2, 1914, by which time the cottage schools' capacity had already been exceeded. Within a year of their opening, the construction of a new grade school on the site of one of the early cottage schools was approved. Construction of the extant 2-storey brick school began in the fall of 1916. The school was one of the few public buildings constructed during the First World War (1914 – 1918) in Medicine Hat and reflective of the importance placed on education by City leaders. The city's positioning on the railway, wealth of natural resources, stable population growth, and strong manufacturing base insulated the city's economy and maintained its stability during the war. These factors permitted the continuance of civic construction projects, including seven new schools built during the First World War. Riverside School is a physical manifestation of this prodigious period of civic construction in Medicine Hat. Similar to the demand for a larger school in the 1910s, three decades after Riverside School was built, the community's population had grown significantly enough to warrant an addition to the original school. A one-storey brick modern-style addition that housed four additional classrooms was added to the rear of the original school. The addition was designed by Calgary architect James Stevenson of the firm Stevenson, Cawston, and Stevenson, and was built by Bird Construction Co. The addition cost \$99,500, and upon its completion in 1950, Riverside School was deemed the most modern school in the city.

Riverside School is further valued as an intact example of an Edwardian Classicism-style education institution. The four-room school with full-height basement, which housed indoor washrooms and an indoor play space, was designed by British architect, Walter Hargreaves Bourne, and constructed by Morton Fulton for the cost of \$22,457. Bourne, who arrived in Medicine Hat in 1912, also designed Earl Kitchener School (1916), as well as a number of Edwardian-era commercial buildings. The school's Edwardian Classical-style is evident through the building's balanced design, sparingly applied ornamentation, flat-arch entry with voussoir, decorative entry cornice with brackets, and selective use of brick banding. This style, which gained popularity during the first decades of the 20th century, was in stark contrast to the more decorative and ornate architectural style of the Victorian period. Civic buildings were frequently designed in this style due to its ability to convey a sense of security and permanency. Riverside School evokes such aspects through its mirrored form, regular fenestration, banded brick pilasters, recessed arched entry with voussoir and decorative canopy, decorative relief brick detailing, corbelled parapet cap, and tall rectangular window openings that extend the vertical effect of the building skywards.

Riverside School is also valued as a landmark within the Medicine Hat neighbourhood of Riverside. The school, and its surrounding grounds, occupy an entire block making it highly identifiable in the primarily residential neighbourhood.

Character-Defining Elements

The key elements that define the heritage character of the Riverside School include, but are not limited to its:

- location nearly midblock on 2nd Street NW between 2nd Avenue NW and 3rd Avenue NW in Medicine Hat's Riverside neighbourhood;
- positioning setback from the street, with the school and grounds occupying an entire block;
- form, scale, and massing as expressed by its: two-storey height with full-height basement; rectangular plan, flat roof with parapet;

- masonry construction including: board formed concrete foundation; common bond red pressed brick with red mortar; concave joints; formed concrete block at water table; red pressed brick with grey mortar on the south façade;
- Edwardian Classicism-style details including: symmetrical form; sparingly applied ornamentation; regular fenestration; flat-arch recessed entry with voussoir, decorative entry cornice with brackets on the front façade; corbelled parapet cap on the front façade; pilasters with brick banding and molded concrete bases; decorative relief brickwork;
- fenestration such as: rectangular single assembly window openings on the first and second floors of the front façade; rectangular double assembly window openings above entrances; rectangular window openings on the side façades; rectangular window openings at the basement; concrete sills;
- additional elements including: red pressed brick chimney with grey mortar and concrete cap; separate boys and girls entryways marked with concrete signbands with “GIRLS ENTRANCE” and “BOYS ENTRANCE;” concrete cornerstone stating “This Stone laid December 11th 1916 by Mrs. Williamson;” one-storey, rectangular, brick addition on the south side with full-height basement, flat roof, and regular fenestration; and
- original interior elements including: wooden trim and flooring; boarded over transoms at classroom doors; wooden newel post and balustrade; and cast iron radiators.

Additional Images



Front façade of Riverside School with regular rectangular fenestration and central recessed entry, June 2014 (DLA)



Side façade showing banded brick pilasters on mold concrete bases with single and double assembly window openings, June 2014 (DLA)



Decorative wooden entry cornice with brackets over recessed central entry with flat brick arch with voussoir, June 2014 (DLA)



Molded concrete base at banded brick pilaster, June 2014 (DLA)



Regular fenestration with concrete sills, with decorative brick relief above and below, June 2014 (DLA)



Concrete cornerstone, June 2014 (DLA)



Corbelled wooden parapet cap on front façade, June 2014 (DLA)



Side entrance with concrete signband, June 2014 (DLA)



One-storey rear 1950 addition to original school, June 2014 (DLA)

Historic Images



Riverside School, 1917 (Esplanade Archives)



Riverside School class photo, 1936 (Esplanade Archives)



Riverside School classroom interior, 1947 (Esplanade Archives)




Riverside School classroom interior, 1947 (Esplanade Archives)

Statement of Integrity

Property Name & Address	Riverside School 201 2 nd 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 Riverside School, built in 1916 - 1917, is valued as an intact example of a historic Medicine Hat school constructed during the First World War as a component of a city-wide school building program initiated in 1909, and was the first brick public school constructed north of the South Saskatchewan River (Theme Value – Education 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 Riverside School is further valued as an intact example of an Edwardian Classicism-style education institution designed by British architect, Walter Hargreaves Bourne (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 Riverside School is also valued as a landmark within the Medicine Hat neighbourhood of Riverside. The school, and its surrounding grounds, occupy an entire block making it highly identifiable in the residential neighbourhood.</p>
Period of Significance	1914 – 1918 First World War 1946 – 1956 Oil Boom
Chronology of Alterations	1913 Construction of wooden-frame cottage school on site 1916 Two-storey brick school constructed 1940 New tar and gravel roof 1942 New washrooms 1950 One-storey brick addition constructed on south façade 1966 First (1913) wooden-frame cottage school demolished 1973 Renovations to school
Aspects of Integrity	<p>Location <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The location of Riverside School has not changed.</p> <p>Design <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The design of the building through the replacement of the original windows. An addition has been placed on the rear façade; however, it is not visible from the front of the building.</p> <p>Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The building continues to be situated in the residential neighbourhood of Riverside.</p> <p>Materials <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The aspects of the original materials of the building are intact; however the wooden-sash windows and door have been replaced.</p>

	<p>Workmanship <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The high quality of the workmanship of Riverside School is evident in its detailing and current condition.</p> <p>Feeling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The school continues to convey a strong historical aesthetic.</p> <p>Association <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable The association of the building has not been altered.</p>
Statement of Integrity	<p>The <u>Riverside School</u> maintains all the aspects of integrity necessary for it to convey its significance/heritage value.</p> <p>Riverside School is in very good condition with most of its original historic fabric intact. The most significant alteration to the historic school was the removal of the original multi-light wooden-sash windows. Although the windows have been replaced with vinyl and/or aluminum sashes, the size of the window openings and concrete sills have been maintained. The front set of double doors with transom and side sets of double doors have been replaced. Overall, the load bearing red pressed brick exterior is in good condition with no evidence of missing, cracked, or spalled bricks. Staining is evident on the lowest courses of brick and below some concrete sills, the former occurrence should be further investigated to determine its source and potential mitigation options. Localized areas of mortar loss are apparent at the base of the walls, on the south façade below the parapet, and on the chimney. Multiple areas exhibit unsympathetic repointing at the basement level. The concrete elements including pilaster bases, concrete block watertable, and cornerstone are in fair condition. The molded concrete pilaster bases exhibit the greater level of deterioration with cracks, staining, and organics present. Parging on the top of some of the pilaster bases has failed. The wooden entry cornice is in very good condition. The cornice is intact and soundly anchored to the building. Later added gutters and a poorly placed rainwater leader are present. Recommend, if possible, relocating the rainwater leader to minimize its visual impact at the front entry. The brick parapet is in good condition with no evidence of cracks due to settlement. The corbelled wooden parapet cap is complete and secured to the building. The current condition of the school is a testament to its caretakers and its pride of place in the neighbourhood.</p>

	Site Number	Category A
	Community District Riverside	
	Designation	

Site Name(s): Riverside School			
Municipal Address: 201 2 nd Street NW		Date of Construction:	1916 - 1917
Consultant(s): Donald Luxton & Associates Inc.		Evaluation Date:	Y 14 M 06 D 09
Heritage Committee: Heritage Resource Committee			
Heritage Planner: Chris Reddy			
			TOTAL
			81

History (H)	E	VG	G	F	P		(H) SCORE
H.1 Associations/Patterns	X					40	40
H.2 Age		X				10	
Comments: H.1 Riverside School is the first brick public school built north of the South Saskatchewan River in the neighbourhood of Riverside. H.2 Constructed in 1916 - 1917.							

Architecture (A)	E	VG	G	F	P	(A) SCORE
A.1 Style/Type/Design		X				20
A.2 Designer/Builder		X				10
A.3 Construction Technology			X			5
A.4 Interior Details			X			4
A.5 Alterations			X			-10
Comments:						
A.1 The Hull Block is a strong example of Edwardian Classicism architecture in an educational institution.						
A.2 Architect – Walter Hargreaves Bourne, Contractor – Morton Fulton						
A.3 Building constructed using red pressed brick with red mortar, regular fenestration, recessed entry with decorative wooden cornice, and decorative brick relief.						
A.4 The interior maintains its original wooden trim, flooring, newel posts, balustrades, and room arrangement.						
A.5 The original wooden-sash windows and doors 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					15	
Comments: C.1 The school is a landmark building in the Riverside neighbourhood. C.2 The school is the dominant character on the block.							