

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Site Name: **HULL BLOCK**  
Date of Construction: 1912-1913  
Address: 579 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SE  
Original Owners: William Roper Hull  
Architect: Francis James Lawson  
Contractors: Oakes & Everard  
Neighbourhood: Downtown  
Legal: 1491;22;16-20  
ATS: 7-SE-31-12-5-W4M



### Description of Historic Place

The impressive Hull Block dominates the southwest corner of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SE in Medicine Hat's historic downtown core. This large three-storey red pressed brick commercial block occupies five lots and has commercial storefront space at the street level with two floors of office space above. The facades are characterized by seven structural bays with symmetrical fenestrations separated by brick pilasters. A substantial pressed tin roof cornice projects outwards from the face of the building above which a solid brick parapet extends the building's overall verticality.

### Heritage Value of Historic Place

The Hull Block, built in 1912-1913, is valued as Medicine Hat's only large-scale purpose-built commercial building situated in the city's historic downtown core. Constructed during the city's Edwardian boom period, just prior to the outbreak of the First World War, Hull Block's impressive scale chartered in a new larger building model for Medicine Hat and reflected the city's significant growth and the economic optimism of the period from the early 1900s to early 1910s. The economic prosperity of the Edwardian era was rooted in the city's early establishment as the Canadian Pacific Railway's western divisional point

and the city's wealth of local clay and gas deposits, which resulted in its emergence as a key manufacturing and distribution centre. These factors culminated in the design and construction of numerous well-crafted and handsome commercial blocks in Medicine Hat's historic downtown; however, none were to the scale of the Hull Block, making this resource a rare example in the city. The block originally contained nine commercial units on the ground floor, each with their own street entrance and basement access and 36 offices spread over the second and third floors accessible from both street façades. The commanding scale and detailing of Hull Block attracted a variety of businesses when it first opened including the Dominion Bank, two music stores, a jeweler, a drugstore, and millinery.

The Hull Block is further significant for its long-term association as the Eaton's department store, Medicine Hat's first department store. In 1927, TECO, later known as The T. Eaton Co. and then as Eaton's, first opened a grocery in the building, which began the company's 64-year association with the Hull Block. Eaton's purchased the block in 1941, and extensively renovated portions of the interior of the building to accommodate its different departments, eventually taking over the entire building circa 1955. The Eaton's department store was further expanded through the construction of an adjacent warehouse southwest of the Hull Block in 1945; a portion of this warehouse later became the toy department. The iconic department store remained in the extant building until January 1991, when the business was closed following a decline in revenues. That same month, Hull Block was purchased by local resident Walter Mueller, who, with his nephew, proceeded to renovate the building over the next two years, returning it to its earlier blueprint of multiple commercial businesses and offices.

The Hull Block is further valued for its connection with Alberta rancher, meat packer, businessman, real estate developer, and philanthropist William Charles James Roper Hull, who constructed a number of buildings throughout Alberta. Born in Broadwindsor, England in 1856, Hull immigrated to Canada with his brother, John, in 1873. The brothers worked as cattlemen at their uncle's ranch near Kamloops, British Columbia, before establishing a horse and cattle ranch of their own in the early 1880s. In 1886, the brothers, with Walter Trounce, formed "Hull, Trounce and Company," which would later become one of the largest ranching, butchering, and packaging companies in the province. Trounce's share of the company would eventually be purchased by the Hull brothers with William overseeing the Alberta operations and John managing the British Columbia holdings. William Hull's business interests expanded to real estate development in the early 1890s, with his construction of the Hull Opera House in Calgary and commercial blocks in Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, and Medicine Hat. The design of Medicine Hat's Hull Block is similar to Hull's buildings in Lethbridge and Edmonton with multiple structural bays separated by brick pilasters; however, none match the scale of Medicine Hat's Hull Block. Hull purchased the lots for the Hull Block for \$37,500 and constructed the extant building for a cost of \$100,000.

The Hull Block is also significant as a robust representation of an Edwardian era commercial building constructed using locally sourced materials. Designed by prolific Calgary architect Francis James Lawson, the building is the only example of his work in Medicine Hat. Local contractors, Oakes & Everard were engaged to construct the building. Hallmarks of this architectural style visible in the building include its symmetrical design with mirrored public façades with full-height storefronts and recessed entries; multiple regularly spaced bays divided by brick pilasters with raised brick relief; symmetrical fenestration on the second and third storeys; concrete banding of sills and lintels; and a generous pressed tin cornice below a substantial brick parapet. The building evokes a sense of permanency and security through its robust form and handsome detailing.

The Hull Block is additionally valued as an iconic landmark in Medicine Hat's historic commercial core. Its scale, siting, and design make it a highly identifiable building.

### Character-Defining Elements

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

- location on the southwest corner of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SE in Medicine Hat's historic commercial core;
- positioning at the property line with no setback from the street, straddling five lots with an alley at the rear of property;
- form, scale, and massing as expressed by its: three-storey height with full-height basement; two public façades on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street; L-shaped plan with flat roof;
- masonry construction including: board formed concrete foundation; common bond red pressed brick with grey mortar; street façades faced with higher quality red pressed brick in common bond with grey mortar; concrete banding at window sills and lintels;
- Edwardian commercial style details including: symmetrical form; regularly spaced bays separated by brick pilasters with central recessed panel detail on the street façades; central recessed entryways on each of the street façades; regular fenestration; decorative pressed tin cornice; brick parapet;
- fenestration such as: rectangular window openings of double and triple assembly on the second and third floors of the street façades; regular arrangement of rectangular window openings on the rear façade; concrete sills and lintels; and
- elements associated with occupancy by Eatons including: one-storey rooftop elevator machine room constructed with red pressed brick grey mortar laid in common bond; large multi-light wooden-sash window with brick sill and Georgian glass, fixed multi-light wooden-sash window with brick sill; concrete parging around storefront.

### Additional Images



Hull Block – horizontal banding of sills and lintels evident and first floor Eaton's storefront, 2014 (DLA).





Hull Block – Structural bays separate by brick pilasters with triple assembly windows on second and third floors, 2014 (DLA).



Hull Block – south façade showing original window fenestration, later added ground floor entry and bricked in window, 2014 (DLA).





Hull Block – Pressed tin cornice and street façade and rear façade brick, 2014 (DLA).



Hull Block – Later added brick elevator machine room on roof, 2014 (DLA).





Hull Block – Underside of first floor laminated timber floor exposed in basement level, 2014 (DLA).

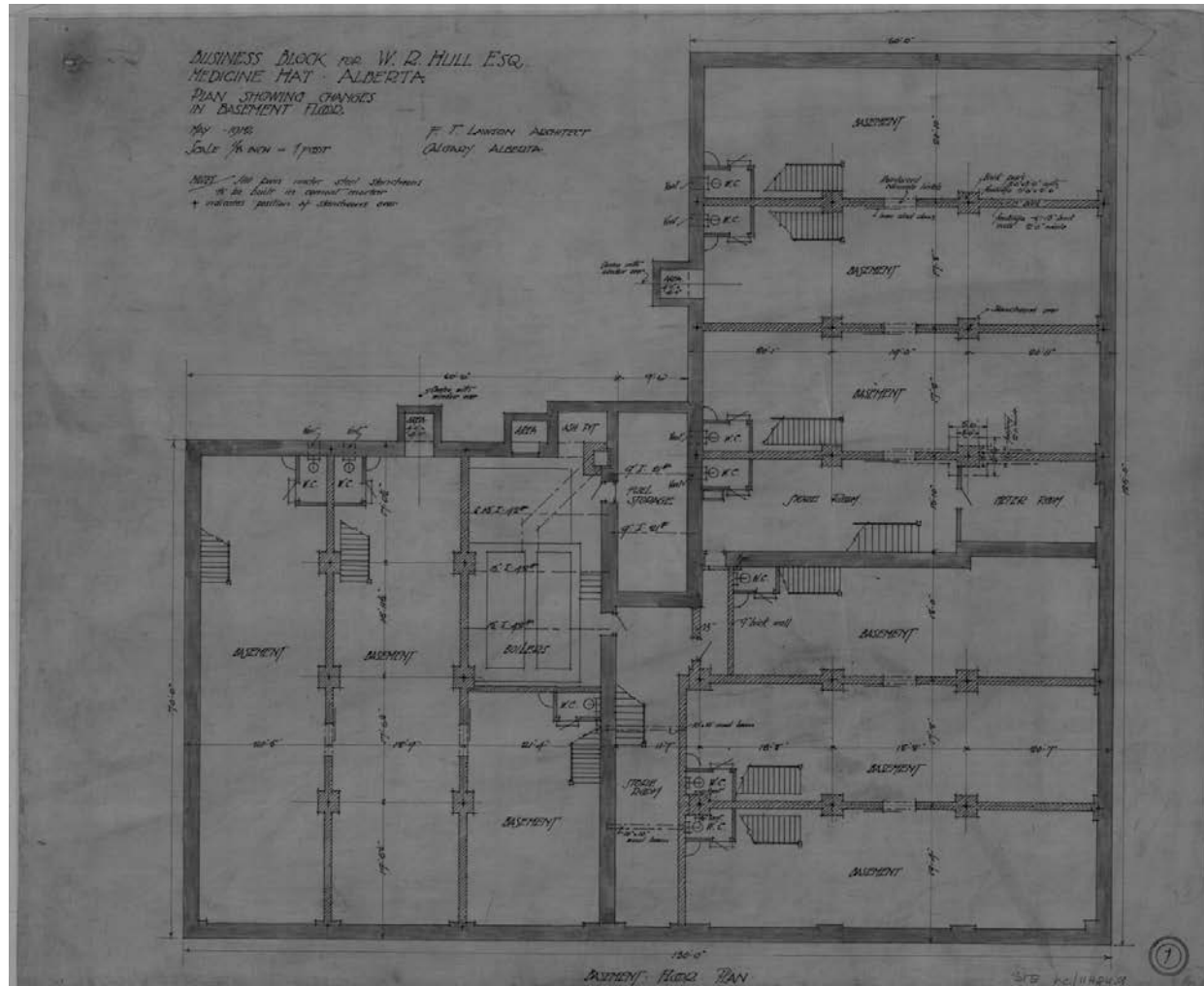


Hull Block – Pressed tin ceiling in basement, 2014 (DLA).



Hull Block – Original newel post and balustrade in stairwell, 2014 (DLA).

## Architectural Drawings



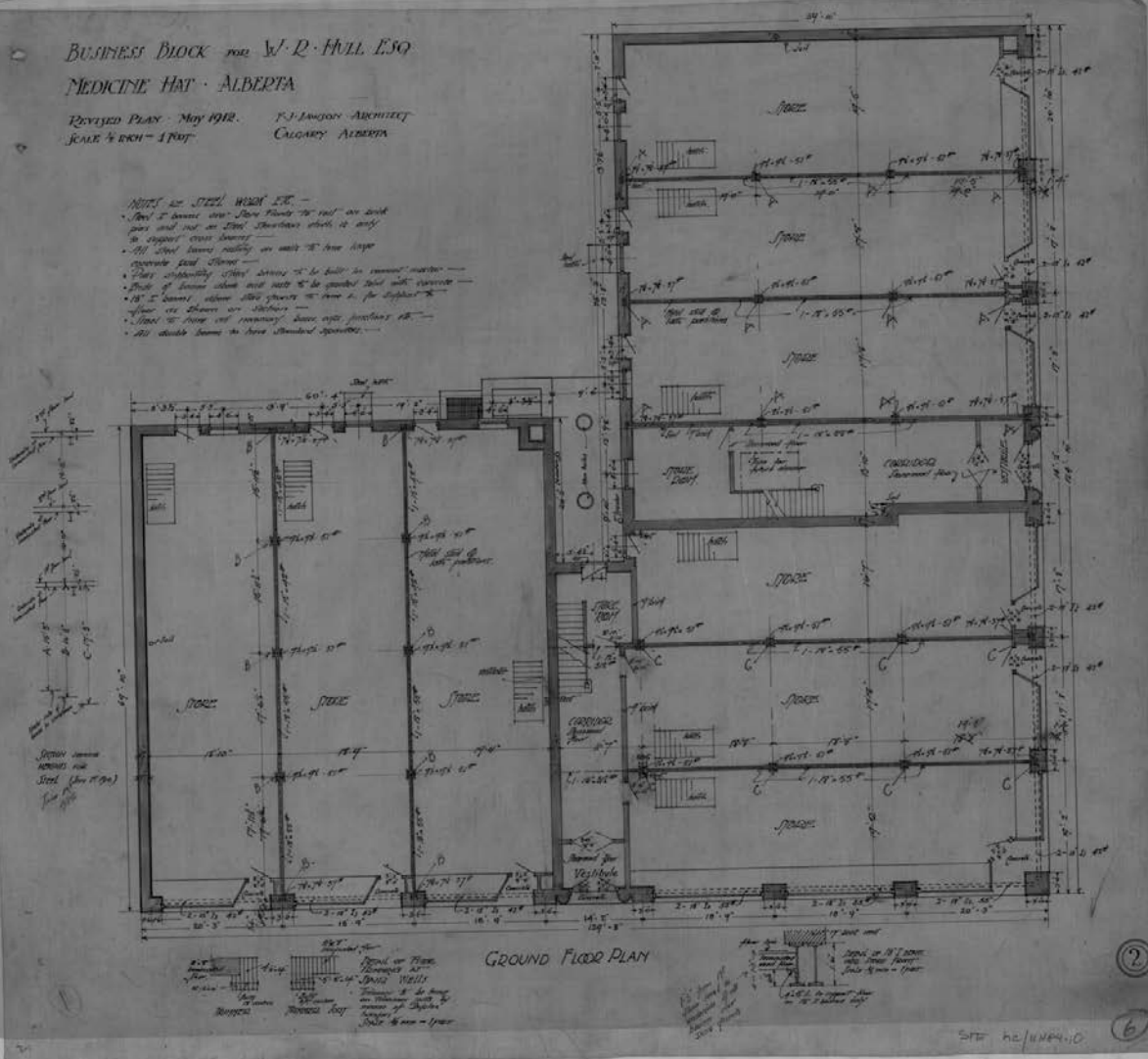
Hull Block – Basement Plan, 1912 (Canadian Architectural Archives, University of Calgary).



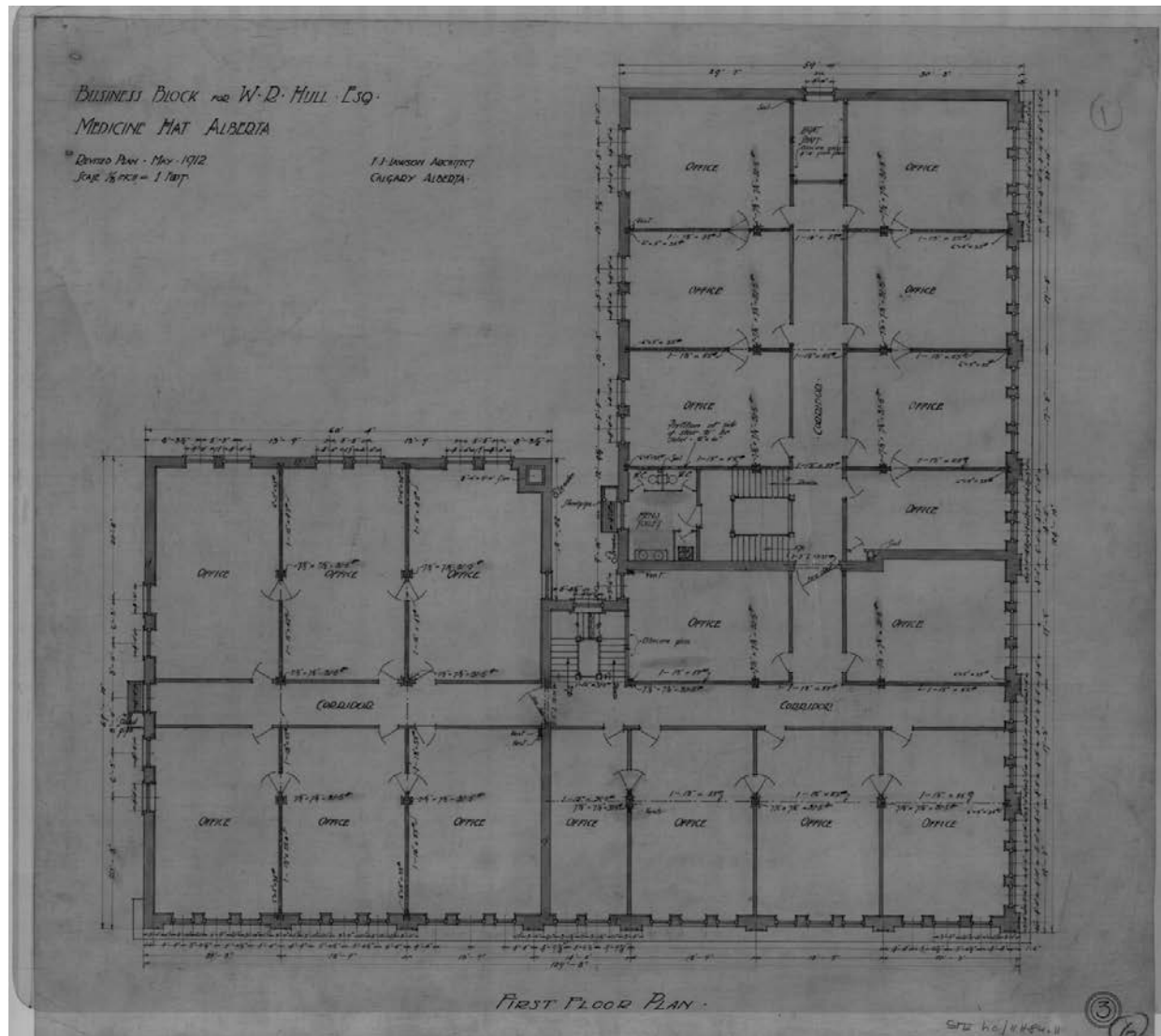
BUSINESS BLOCK FOR W. D. HULL ESQ.  
MEDICINE HAT, ALBERTA

REVISED PLAN - MAY 1912. F. J. JACOBSON ARCHITECT  
CALGARY, ALBERTA

- NOTES ON STEEL WORK ETC. -
- Steel I beams are shown placed to rest on steel posts and not on brick foundations which is only to support cross beams.
  - All steel beams resting on walls to have large square base plates.
  - Steel columns are shown to be built in masonry walls.
  - Posts of beams shown and walls to be made steel with concrete.
  - All I beams, shown steel girders are shown to be placed to support the beams on columns.
  - Steel to have all necessary brace and bracing etc.
  - All double beams to have standard spacers.

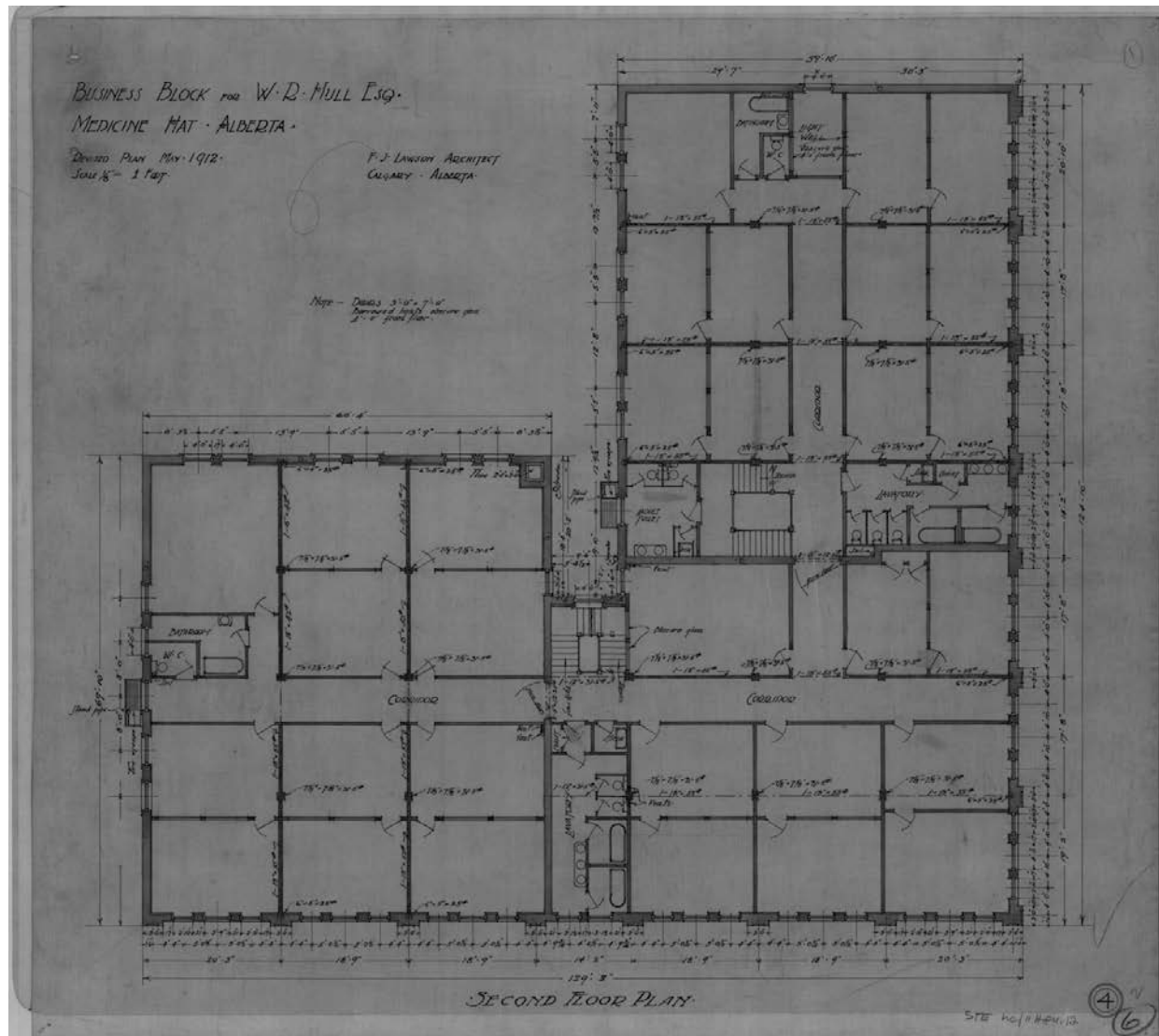


Hull Block – First Floor Plan, 1912 (Canadian Architectural Archives, University of Calgary).

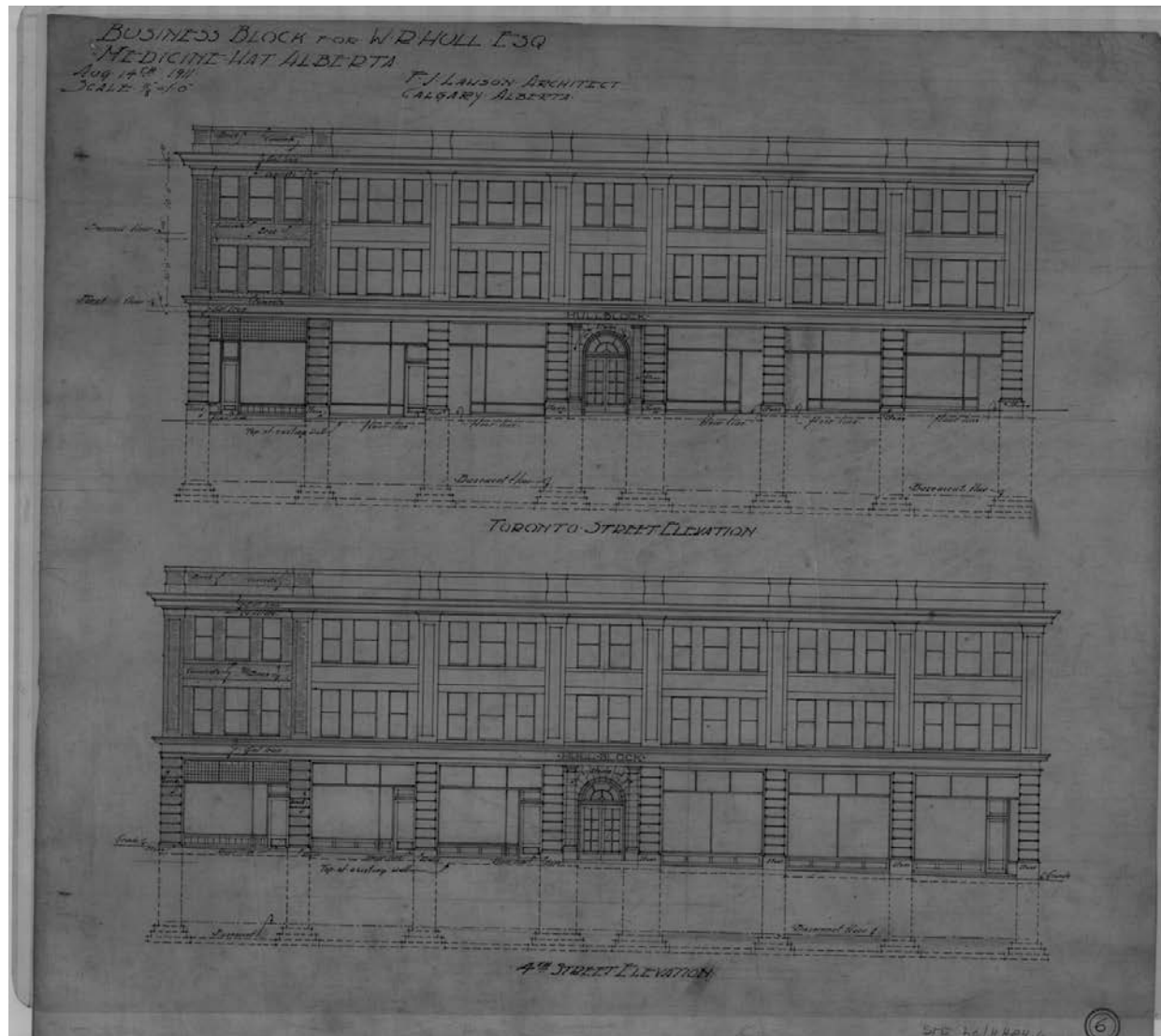


Hull Block – Second Floor Plan, 1912 (Canadian Architectural Archives, University of Calgary).





Hull Block – Third Floor Plan, 1912 (Canadian Architectural Archives, University of Calgary).



Hull Block – Street Elevations, 1912 (Canadian Architectural Archives, University of Calgary).



## Historic Images



Hull Block postcard, circa 1910s (Esplanade Archives)



Hull Block showing original storefront configuration, circa 1910s (Esplanade Archives).



Third Street SE looking east, Hull Block on right, 1913 (Esplanade Archives).



Hull Block, following purchase and renovation by Eaton's, 1972 (Esplanade Archives).




### Statement of Integrity

<b>Property Name &amp; Address</b>	Hull Block 579 3 <sup>rd</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 Hull Block, built in 1912-1913, is valued as Medicine Hat's only large-scale purpose built commercial building situated in the city's historic downtown core (<b>Theme Value – City Development in Medicine Hat</b>).</p> <p>The Hull Block is further significant for its long-term association as the Eaton's department store, the city first large-scale department store (<b>Theme Value – City Development in Medicine Hat</b>).</p> <p>The Hull Block is further valued for its connection with Alberta rancher, meat packer, businessman, real estate developer, and philanthropist William Charles James Roper Hull, who constructed a number of buildings throughout Alberta (<b>Theme Value – City Development 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 Hull Block is significant as a robust representation of a Classical Revival style Edwardian era commercial building constructed using locally sourced 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 Hull Block is additionally valued as an iconic landmark in Medicine Hat's historic commercial core. Its scale, siting, and design make it a highly identifiable building.</p>
<b>Period of Significance</b>	1906 – 1913 Pre-First World War Boom, Age of Optimism 1919 – 1927 Post-Second World War to Stock Market Crash
<b>Chronology of Alterations</b>	1945 Warehouse 1962 Renovation of warehouse 1963 Interior renovation, construction of loading chute, front doors, and canopy 1964 Renovation to main floor 1967 New roof and coping 1971 Interior renovation 1991 Skylight, renovation to stairs (main & exit) & washroom, sprinkler system installed 1992 Renovation of multiple ground floor commercial units & second and third floor office spaces 1993 Renovation of multiple office spaces 1996 Renovation of second floor plaza space 2001 New stairway for Gas Light Plaza 2002 Restaurant renovations 2004 Office renovations

	2007 Interior addition 2010 Interior renovations 2012 Commercial interior renovations on first floor & office renovations third floor 2013 Office renovations third floor & fire sprinkler installation
<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 Hull Block has not changed.</p> <p><b>Design</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable  The design of the building has been altered, most significantly at the storefront level. This aligns with the Eaton's occupation of the building.</p> <p><b>Environment</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable  The building continues to be situated in Medicine Hat's commercial downtown core.</p> <p><b>Materials</b> <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 storefront has been reconfigured and wooden-sash windows replaced.</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 Hull Block is evident in its detailing and current condition.</p> <p><b>Feeling</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable  The building continues 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 association of the building has not been altered.</p>
<b>Statement of Integrity</b>	<p>The <u>Hull Block</u> maintains all the aspects of integrity necessary for it to convey its significance/heritage value.</p> <p>Overall, the Hull Block is in good condition with much of its original fabric intact. The form, scale, and massing of the L-shaped three-storey building has been retained with additions restricted to the rear and roof of the building and are not visible from the street. The red pressed brick exterior of the building, evident on the second floor and above, is in good condition with no significant areas of cracking, spalling, or evidence of displacement. The majority of masonry deterioration on the street façades is limited to the parapet, which is in fair condition; however, multiple locations exhibit mortar loss and past occurrences of unsympathetic repointing. The capping on the parapet is continuous with no missing sections, although undersized. Portions of the brick parapet have been painted, likely to cover graffiti. The former painted "Eaton's" sign on south façade has been painted over; however the sign's lettering is still evident. The horizontal banding connecting the windowsills and lintels have been painted and is chipped at multiple locations on the street façades. The most significant alterations to the Hull Block are to the building's first floor and windows. The storefront of the building has been clad in stucco (circa 1950s) and the original arrangement of nine individual storefronts, each with its own</p>

	<p>street access, is no longer evident. The original locations of the main recessed entryways off 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SE and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE have been maintained; however, the doors and transoms have been replaced and decorative door surrounds have been removed. Additional points of exit have been installed on the south and west façades of the building. The building's original 1-over-1 single-hung wooden-sash windows have been replaced; however, the window openings have been maintained. A number of windows on the south and west façades have been bricked in. The windowsills on the south and west façades exhibit a greater degree of deterioration and staining than those on the street façades. Repairs should be completed to limit any further damage to the sills on these two façades. The substantial roof cornice on the street façades is intact and well anchored to the building. The cornice exhibits paint failure throughout and localized rusting, suggesting condensation is pooling on the cornice. Investigations should be conducted to identify and, if possible, mitigate condensation. The roof is in good condition and has recently been replaced. The roof membrane extends up the interior face of the parapet and under the cap flashing. The roof membrane also extends up the face of the later added skylight boxes. Standing pools of water, some with vegetation growing in them, do exist on the roof. Measures should be taken to limit this, where possible, and/or additional monitoring undertaken to ensure the building is not adversely impacted. Modifications to the rear of the building, primarily associated with renovations by Eaton's and HVAC upgrades are not visible from the street and are readily identifiable from the original fabric of the Hull Block.</p> <p>The interior of the Hull Block has been significantly altered from its original design. These alterations were undertaken by Eaton's, which removed the original floor plan of the three floors, and, more recently, by Walter Mueller who has returned the building to its original multi-tenant occupancy and the current owners of the block. The basement, although altered, possesses the most original intact interior fabric including pressed tin ceiling, paneled wooden doors, and laminated timber ceiling.</p>
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	Site Number	Category A
	Community District Downtown	
	Designation	

<b>Site Name(s):</b> Hull Block			
<b>Municipal Address:</b> 579 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street SE		Date of Construction:	1912
<b>Consultant(s):</b> Donald Luxton & Associates Inc.		Evaluation Date:	Y 14 M 08 D 26
<b>Heritage Committee:</b> Heritage Resource Committee			
<b>Heritage Planner:</b> Chris Reddy			
			<b>TOTAL</b>
			77

History (H)	E	VG	G	F	P		(H) SCORE
H.1 Associations/Patterns		X				20	30
H.2 Age		X				10	
Comments: H.1 The Hull Block is Medicine Hat’s first, and only, large-scale purpose built Edwardian era commercial building situated in the city’s historic downtown core. H.2 Constructed in 1912.							

Architecture (A)	E	VG	G	F	P		(A) SCORE
A.1 Style/Type/Design		X				20	27
A.2 Designer/Builder		X				10	
A.3 Construction Technology			X			5	
A.4 Interior Details				X		2	
A.5 Alterations			X			-10	
Comments:							
A.1 The Hull Block is a solid representation of commercial Classical Revival style architecture.							
A.2 Architect – Francis James Lawson, Contractor – Oakes & Everard							
A.3 Building constructed using red pressed brick with recessed bays separated by structural brick piers on the street façades.							
A.4 Few original interior elements remain in the building and are limited to the basement.							
A.5 The original storefront has been significantly altered and the original wooden-sash windows replaced on the upper storeys.							

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 Hull block scale and design dominates the corner of 6 <sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street SE. C.2 The commercial building contributes to the historic aesthetic of the street and Medicine Hat’s downtown core.							