

Builders' Hardware

5032 Gaetz Avenue



Description of the Historic Place

The Builders' Hardware is a semi-attached flat roofed brick building with two storeys in the front and one in the rear. This building has aluminum storefront windows on the main floor and a short tower on the side façade. It is one of several two-storey brick buildings on Gaetz Avenue, a prominent commercial street in downtown Red Deer.

Heritage Value

The Builders' Hardware is significant for its modern commercial design as well as for its association with the theme of post-war commercial development in downtown Red Deer.

The Builders' Hardware is significant for its modern commercial design. The long, low profile with a flat roof is an element seen in many modern buildings in the Red Deer area, as is the relatively plain brick façade and exposed, minimalist concrete elements. The functional plan of the building has two storeys on the front façade with retail space on the main floor and office space on the second floor. The rear of the building is one storey, providing both retail and storage space. The long horizontal bank of showroom windows on the front façade is set in a rectangular cast stone frame embellished with a metal ribbon band that echoes the roofline. The second storey band of windows that emphasizes the building's length has a large cast stone surround and further emphasizes the building's horizontal lines. The Builders' Hardware has only two asymmetrical elements: the side door with the vertical glass block window above on one side of the structure, and the tall rectangular brick tower with flag pole on the other. These elements are balanced in both their placement on the far sides of the building and in their emphasis on height and vertical lines, providing a contrast to the horizontal emphasis of the building's core.

The Builders' Hardware is significant for its association with the theme of post-war commercial development in downtown Red Deer. Red Deer grew substantially after the Second World War. The combined effect of servicemen returning to the city and Red Deer's dramatic industrial growth resulted in an increased demand on the services. Successful businesses were anxious to project a new and modern image, and the

Statements of Significance for the Downtown Red Deer Legacy Year Project

Builders' Hardware, a subsidiary of the Revelstoke Lumber Company, replaced their original building with this state of the art hardware store in 1949 at a cost of \$50,000. The new building's vitrolite front, modern light fixtures, interior spotlights, and coloured lights for display windows highlight its use of new materials and functional plan. The Builders' Hardware occupied the building until 1964, when it was renamed Builders' Merit Store, and then simply the Merit Store. The building, a hardware store until 1984, has been occupied by Prairie Office Products since 1987. The Builders' Hardware was recognized as contributing to the downtown Red Deer streetscape when it received exterior rehabilitation as part of Red Deer's Alberta Main Street project.

Character Defining Elements

The character defining elements as expressed in the form, massing, and materials of the 1949 two-storey Builders' Hardware include:

- The flat roof
- The running bond red brick cladding with occasional single and twinned header courses
- The large rectangular brick tower with a decorative concrete 'cap' and a metal flagpole mounted to the front
- The inset vertical bands of brick on the tower
- The glass block windows set in a cast stone frame on the front façade
- The glass block windows on the side façade
- The offset entrance with a large transom window
- The five sets of two double-hung second storey windows in a cast stone surround with concrete detailing between them
- The pattern, style and construction of all original windows and doors