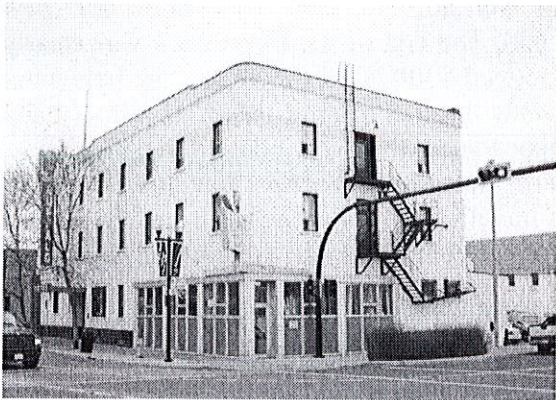


Buffalo Hotel

5031 Ross Street



Description of the Historic Place

The three-storey, flat roofed Buffalo Hotel has rounded corners and a smooth stucco finish. The hotel also has a ribbon band on the third floor, black tile cladding on the foundation, and two large neon signs. It is prominently located on a large corner lot at the busy intersection of Ross Street and 51st Avenue in downtown Red Deer.

Heritage Value

The Buffalo Hotel is significant for its association with the development of Red Deer's early hotel district, for its association with post-Depression commercial development in Red Deer, for its Streamlined Moderne design influences, and for its modern commercial design elements included in the hotel's 1959 renovation.

The Buffalo Hotel is valuable for its association with the development of Red Deer's early hotel district. The business began in 1892 as the Alberta Hotel, and its strategic location near the Calgary-Edmonton Railway station was ideally situated to entice commercial travellers and newly arrived settlers to take advantage of its many amenities. As one of four hotels located in Red Deer at that time, the Alberta Hotel quickly developed a reputation as one of the best places to stay while travelling between Calgary and Edmonton. George Beatty purchased it in 1903 and added a large three-storey brick addition which can be seen today on the east side of the hotel. When Beatty accidentally killed himself in 1907 while shooting feral cats in the hotel's basement, C.J. Rutter bought the building and sold it in 1910 to the Rancher's Trust Company for \$23,000. Prohibition laws and the start of the First World War significantly reduced the demand on Red Deer's hotel community, and by 1916 the Alberta Hotel was the only one of the city's early hotels that remained fully operational.

The Buffalo Hotel is important for its association with the theme of post-Depression commercial development in Red Deer. In 1920 the Alberta Hotel was purchased by the Calgary Brewing and Malting Company. The old hotel was demolished in 1939 except for Beatty's three-storey 1903 brick addition, and the current modern three-storey hotel

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was built in its place. The Buffalo Hotel was renamed after the Calgary Brewing and Malting Company's well-known logo – the buffalo. The hotel renovation and new construction costs were estimated to be \$70,000. The end of the Depression was clearly evident in Red Deer. Construction spending topped \$300,000 in 1939 and the beginning of the Second World War created new demands through a large influx of military and support staff. In addition to its smart new appearance, the hotel boasted a coffee shop, dining room, banquet rooms and a bar with a separate ladies' beer parlour. It was a social hub and important meeting place for business travellers as evident when it was the chosen venue for a lavish dinner marking the arrival of natural gas service in Red Deer in 1947.

The Buffalo Hotel is significant for its Streamlined Moderne design influences. The Streamlined Moderne style was popular in the 1930s and 1940s, and reflected the architectural recognition of the machine age as best exemplified by the automobile. It is characterized by several features found in the Buffalo Hotel, including the rounded corners, smooth walls, and geometric detailing. The prominent use of new modern materials such as the hotel's black tiles and glass blocks were also typical of the Moderne movement.

The Buffalo Hotel is significant for its use of the modern commercial design elements included in the hotel's 1959 renovation. The \$30,000 project involved an interior and exterior modernization of the hotel's restaurant, visible today on the northwest corner of the main floor. Influenced by modern design, the aluminum curtain wall section of the building is in stark contrast to the Streamlined Moderne design of the 1939 building and adds a further layer of equally significant architectural interest. Two neon signs, important features in Moderne Streamline design, were included in the 1959 renovation. One is located above the aluminum storefront and reads "COFFEE SHOP". The other, which is located on the north façade and reads "BUFFALO", is two storeys in height and is one of the last rotating neon sign bands operating in Alberta. The Buffalo Hotel 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 1903/1939/1959 three-storey Buffalo Hotel include:

1903

- The flat roof and small, stepped parapet
- The structural articulation on the second and third storeys of the 1903 section to the left of the front door
- The pattern, style and construction of all original window and door openings

1939

- The flat roof and small, stepped parapet
- The smooth stucco finish with rounded corners
- The stucco ribbon along the third storey with vertical scoring

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- The cantilever roof above the front entrance
- The stucco lintels beneath the windows
- The original exterior colours and pattern
- The double wooden doors on the north façade, which were moved from the lobby to the exterior of the building as part of a 2004 Main Street intervention
- The stylized fire escape on the west façade
- The glass block windows set into the black tile
- The pattern, style and construction of all original window and door openings

1959

- The aluminum storefront on the northwest corner
- The neon sign boards which reads “BUFFALO”
- The neon sign boards which reads “COFFEE SHOP”
- The pattern, style and construction of all original window and door openings