

Dawson City, Yukon
Lowes Mortuary
Second Avenue

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The earliest part of the building was built by the spring of 1898 (exact date unknown). A false front was added later in 1898 followed by a number of extensions to the rear (ca. 1899-1910). The building has housed a variety of commercial establishments from a blacksmith shop to a mortuary. In 1976, the property was acquired by Parks Canada for administrative purposes who undertook substantial stabilization work in 1982. Lowes Mortuary is part of Klondike National Historic Sites. Environment Canada is custodian of the property. See FHBRO Building Report 86-91.

Reason for Designation

Lowes Mortuary was designated Recognized because of its association with the earliest days of the Klondike Gold Rush, particularly blacksmithing and outfitting, and the subsequent change and evolution of the community. The building, through its sequence of additions, range of materials, and variety of methods of construction, executed with evident lack of craftsmanship, is a modest but excellent example of early vernacular construction in the urban north of Canada. Lowes Mortuary is an important documentary element in the authentic Dawson City streetscape.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the building resides in its false-fronted, long, low, single-storey form which includes several additions to the original building. Several periods and occupants are evident in its combination of gable and shed roofs and its materials. The various additions also offer evidence of changes in skills and locally available materials. The earliest part of the building, that built in log, is likely the earliest surviving building in Dawson City.

The importance of this structure lies more in its lack of craftsmanship than in its skill of construction. As such it is an important document that traces the transition of the community.

The custodial department has carried out extensive research of this property. The information gained from this research should direct future management and care of the property.

Considering its uniqueness and interest, any intervention should be minimal in scope and have as its goal the protection of surviving historic, forms, fabric and construction methods.

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