

Dawson City  
**Winaut's Store**  
Second Avenue just north of Queen Street

## **HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

The commercial block commonly known as Winaut's Store is in fact three connected buildings, erected by the Syndicat Lyonnais du Klondike in 1902.

Between 1902 and the final abandonment of the block in 1957, a number of external modifications were made to the block by a succession of restaurateurs and dry goods dealers. Between 1981 and 1983 Parks Canada undertook the restoration of the principal facade. The side and rear elevations were rehabilitated in 1986.

The building is owned by Parks Canada; interpretive displays have been installed in the show windows. See FHBRO Building Report 86-89.

### **Reasons for Designation**

Winaut's Store was designated Recognized because of its thematic Associations, the special role it played in the development of the community, the visual qualities of the building, and the fine workmanship and skillful use of materials displayed in its construction. The building's environmental significance derives from the integrity of its relationship with the street, the contribution it makes to the character of the historic district, and its strong identity within the community.

The theme most closely identified with the building is the post-gold rush development of Dawson as a goods and service centre for the Klondike gold fields. The tenancies of William Horkan, a restaurateur (1902-1903); Frank W. Herring, a men's outfitter (1902-1906); Samuel J. Stewart and Harold W. England, clothiers and haberdashers (1910-1916); Herbert Winaut, a clothing merchant (1926-1942), and Jack Butterworth, a dealer in general merchandise (1942-1957), represent a continuity of commercial enterprise directed at Dawson's predominantly male population, and notable for its consistency and longevity.

The construction by Syndicat Lyonnais du Klondike of a new commercial block on Second Avenue in spring 1902 was a clear expression of confidence in the future of that commercial thoroughfare. The choice of an ornate and finely proportioned street face, of a type usually reserved for the higher valued properties on Front Street, set a new standard for Second Avenue businesses.

The northernmost building embodies a number of innovative and daring architectural/engineering details which demonstrate a sophistication not generally found in boomtown fronted structures. To accommodate the enormous oriel window at the second floor, a complex timber lattice truss spanning the full width of the building

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Dawson City  
**Winaut's Store** (Continued)

was introduced to carry the roof loads. To establish a clear span at the ground floor,

an enormous suspension rod was dropped from the centre of the same truss to pick up the end of the central beam.

To flood the interior with daylight, large prefabricated sheet metal ridge-type skylights were placed on the roof. Beneath each is a correspondingly large lightwell to allow daylight to penetrate to the ground floor. Because the skylights are positioned over the central girder, the member is interrupted at each opening and the ends taken on posts. In addition to these structural novelties, all of the light framing members have been carefully wrapped in asbestos paper and the exterior sheathed in corrugated iron to render the building fireproof.

The relationship of the building to the street it faces, if one overlooks the change in elevation necessitated by the lifting of neighbouring buildings, is essentially the same as in 1902. While no longer part of an intact period streetscape, Winaut's is an important component at an historically important street intersection (Second Avenue and Queen Street), and is critical to its preservation. The position of the building on a busy pedestrian thoroughfare, opposite one of Dawson's largest hotels, and next door to one of Dawson's last surviving general merchandise retailers, has contributed to its conspicuous identity within the community.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of the block derives mainly from the boomtown architectural treatment given the street elevation in 1902. On the northernmost building, notable features include the deep entablature (a bold projecting cornice and false gable peak carried on four fanciful columns supported on corbels), the tall flagpole with weathervane, the corner pilasters enriched by decoration, and the enormous wood oriel window. A less imposing oriel window is the sole remarkable element belonging to the centre building. A large plate glass front (a recessed double front door, transom and splayed sidelights flanked by show windows, partitioned at the interior), which replaced the original ground floor fronts of all 3 buildings c.1910, is equally deserving of careful preservation. Essential to the heritage character of the block are the original and reproduction commercial signs painted on canvas and hung on the block or painted directly on the various wall surfaces.

The interior of the northernmost building is notable for the 1902 system of posts and girders, framed lightwells and roof skylights, which together, permitted the illumination of both the ground and second floors by daylight. A tenancy which would accommodate and utilize this innovative feature is encouraged.

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### Dawson City **Winaut's Store** (Continued)

The historic relationship between the block and the busy commercial thoroughfare of Second Avenue derives in part from the proximity of the building to the board walk, the dressed show windows, and the presence of such street furniture as the pipe-framed fixed awning, outdoor displays, and wood bench. The maintenance and/or development of these elements will contribute to the Gold Rush character sought by the community.

Considering the commercial character of the ground floor (recessed entrance, extensive show windows), the residential character of the second floor (oriel windows, stair access direct to street), and the use generally proclaimed by the period signage, the

most appropriate and easily accommodated use for the building would be a combined commercial/residential tenancy.

A cluster of outbuildings, contemporary with the main block, which adjoined the west wall and extended back to the lane, was demolished before 1908. The existing detached warehouse dating from the 1930s is not included in this designation.

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