

Dawson City, Yukon **Former Post Office** Corner King Street and Third Avenue

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Post Office was built in 1900 to designs by Thomas W. Fuller. It served as the city post office until 1923 after which it had a variety of owners until 1970, when it was re-purchased by the federal government. The Post Office was designated of national significance by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada in 1967. In 1974, the building was stabilized and repaired by Parks Canada and opened to the public as a part of Klondike National Historic Sites. Environment Canada is custodian of the building. See FHBRO Building Report 87-67.

Reason for Designation

The Post Office was designated Classified because of its important historical associations, its architecture, and its importance to the streetscape of the community. The Post Office is a major local landmark.

The building is closely associated with the commitment, establishment, and exercise of sovereignty by the federal government in the north-west. It also represents the provision of postal and other essential federal services in frontier communities.

The former Dawson City Post Office is an excellent example of a pre-WWI post office executed in wood. Classical in design like the other Dawson City federal buildings, the post office retains the details and materials of its original design and construction. The building's exterior is modest but carefully detailed. The octagonal tower gives the building a sense of stability, defines the entry and provides an important focal point in the town.

The former Post Office is unique in Canada in that although built in wood, it is clearly a federal building and carries many of the features of the more substantial masonry federal buildings built in southern communities. It is an example of the adaptation of a design to local construction conditions and materials and skills availability in an area where masonry construction was impractical but the design requirements similar.

The interior of the building retains its original plan, separation of the Post Office and Customs and Crown Lands functions, finishes, services and principal furnishings. The interior materials and workmanship are exceptional, almost all finishes, trim and furnishings being executed in varnished fir. The interior has been altered very little. As such it is an extremely rare example of a purpose-built federal building from the period that still displays every detail and feature of its original purpose and design. The building has considerable artifactual value.

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Dawson City, Yukon
Former Post Office (Continued)

The building is an important example of the work of Thomas W. Fuller prior to his

becoming Chief Architect of DPW.

As one of the most substantial, distinctive, and well-designed buildings in Dawson City, the Post Office has always had a strong visual impact in the community. It is a key element in establishing the turn-of-the-century character of the King Street and Third Avenue area and is an important regional landmark.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the old Post Office resides in the entirety of its exterior and interior composition, design and fabric and in its surviving original services, furnishings and fittings. The building is currently being presented to visitors as an important component of Klondike National Historic Sites and to provide some postal services on a seasonal basis. This use is entirely appropriate as it has almost no impact on the integrity of the building and makes it accessible to the public. Given this building's considerable value as an unaltered, fully preserved federal building from the period and as one of the last surviving intact period interiors in Dawson City, any proposal to change or enhance its current use should be carefully scrutinized with respect to the potential short- and long-term impact on the building and its present high level of integrity.

Given the exceptional heritage value of the building and its all-wood construction, a multi-disciplinary fire protection survey and possible enhancement of the current level of protection is recommended.

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