

Dawson City, Yukon

**Mme. Tremblay's Store**

Third Avenue Southeast Corner King Street

**HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

The commercial block commonly known as Mme. Tremblay's Store was constructed in the summer of 1899 as a store and lodging house venture. The designer and/or builder is unknown. Acquired by Pierre Nolasque "Jack" and Emilie Tremblay in 1913, the building was modified to a modest degree to serve as a combination millinery/dry goods store and flat. More extensive changes were made by Michael and Timothy Cole after their purchase of the building in 1946 to convert the upper floor to a pair of apartments and the ground floor to a workshop. Between 1978 and 1980 the building exterior was restored to its circa 1915-17 appearance. The second floor of the interior was adopted for staff housing. The ground floor was fitted as a shop and is currently leased as same. The Canadian Parks Service is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 88-12.

**Reasons for Designation**

Mme. Tremblay's Store was designated Recognized because of its historical associations, superior functional qualities, fine workmanship and skillful use of materials displayed in its construction. The integrity of the building's relationship with the street, the contribution it makes to the character of the historic district and its strong identity within the community are also reasons for designation.

Of the various tenants of the building the most noteworthy is Emilie Tremblay, a native of the Lac St. Jean region of Quebec. Documentary and oral sources recall her early appearance in the Territory (Sixtymile, 1894), her long residence and efforts as an independent miner on the creeks, and her resolute management of the millinery/dry goods business in Dawson in tough economic times.

The effectiveness of materials, layout and mode of construction is best demonstrated by the length of service of the building as a combination retail/residential establishment, more or less uninterrupted from 1899 to 1976.

While no longer part of a fully developed streetscape, Mme. Tremblay's store anchors one corner of an historically important street intersection and is critical to its integrity. The position of the building on a busy pedestrian axis anchored by two major nodes - the Palace Grand Theatre and Diamond Tooth Gertie's Gambling Casino - has contributed to its high profile within the community.

.../2

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of the building derives from the architectural treatment given the street elevations, particularly the boxed cornice supported on scrollwork brackets, the regularly spaced and elegantly proportioned windows, the inset and splayed corner window and double front door, the handsome oriel window, and the painted cove siding. The projecting wooden lettering spelling out the business name enhances the commercial ambiance of Dawson and should be retained.

Internally, the building's ground floor housed a retail establishment in the northern two-thirds a small shop or office in the southern one-third. The second floor has traditionally been given over to residential use. A tenancy which would respect this arrangement is essential to maintaining the streetscape character and the commercial viability of the district.

The historic relationship between the building and the busy commercial thoroughfares of Third Avenue and King Street derives in part from the proximity of the building to the lot lines and boardwalks, the presence of street furniture (namely the pipe-framed awning and wood bench), and the dressed show windows. The maintenance and/or development of these elements will contribute to the Gold Rush character sought by the community.

Considering the present exterior appearance of the building, with its extensive show windows and distinctive sign proclaiming it to be "Mme. Tremblay's Store," the obvious suitability of the structure for combined commercial and residential use, and the interpretive benefits that would accrue from appropriate occupants, a use that continues the residential and mercantile/commercial mix would be most appropriate.