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MOUNTAIN VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Date:

October 2013

MOUNTAIN VIEW SCHOOL STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE



Historic Name: Revelstoke High School / Mountain View (Elementary) School
Original Contractor: Otto William Abrahamson
Date of Construction: 1914

Description of the Historic Place

Mountain View School is a two-storey, plus full basement, masonry building on 3rd Street West, facing the Columbia River in the city of Revelstoke. This neoclassical-style building is characterized by its symmetrical front façade and its formal central entryway, which features Doric columns and a grand staircase.

Heritage Value of the Historic Place

Mountain View School is valued as the last remaining example of a large, masonry school constructed during the early years of Revelstoke’s development, and as an excellent example of institutional neoclassical architecture. It is connected with the early growth and development of the Revelstoke community. The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway line began in the area in 1885 and Revelstoke was incorporated as a City on March 1, 1899. By the early 1900s, settlement in the area began in earnest as people began constructing homes and businesses and pushing for the establishment of infrastructure and social amenities. The Revelstoke High School, as the building was originally known, was constructed in 1914 to meet the demands of the growing community. Initially, the school was too large for the population of the area, but by the 1930s, it had reached capacity. The building has, over time, accommodated all grades of the school system, and is an important landmark in the community.

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Mountain View School represents a refined, institutional version of the Classical Revival style of architecture that was popular at during the Edwardian era. Articulated in a tripartite division of base, shaft and capital, the richly-detailed main façades are clad in two tones of brick, with sophisticated detailing that demonstrates a high quality of design and craftsmanship. Advocates of the neoclassical revival believed that the beautification of cities through the introduction of monumental classical grandeur would promote a harmonious social order. Beauty would act as a social control device by inspiring moral and civic virtue among urban populations, and bring North American cities to cultural parity with those of Europe. The style was promoted as the most appropriate expression for civic buildings and remained popular for a number of decades. Well-known local contractor, Otto William Abrahamson, was hired by the School District to construct the brick and stone school, using the finest local materials. Early school buildings were often built of masonry, as this resulted in a structurally sound, fire-resistant building, which stood out as a landmark structure against the more common wood-frame residences in the surrounding area. When opened, the state-of-the-art school featured four classrooms, an office, a typing room, and two areas in the basement for physics and domestic science; Revelstoke boasted a high school with facilities that were unrivalled in British Columbia. The impressive brick and stone building is characterized by its exterior neoclassical detailing, including its projecting cornices and its projecting front entryway, featuring robust Doric order columns and a grand staircase.

Character-Defining Elements

Key elements that define the heritage character of the Mountain View Elementary School include its:

- location facing the banks of the Columbia River in the City of Revelstoke
- institutional form, scale and massing as expressed by its two-storey plus full-basement height, flat roof, projecting cornices, symmetrical front façade and projecting central entry;
- construction materials including concrete structure, textured red brick cladding, textured brown brick quoining and banding, sheet metal cornices, pressed tin entry soffits, concrete base scored to resemble ashlar blocks, and precast concrete detailing;
- neoclassical design features, such as: tripartite façade articulation with horizontal banding; brick quoins; projecting parapet cornices with scrolled eave brackets; central entry arch with voussoirs and central keystone; projecting front entryway with a flat roof supported by two freestanding and two engaged Doric columns, with square bases and capitals; entry soffits of pressed tin sheets; and grand staircase with low, curved balustrades;
- original double-hung 1-over-1 wooden-sash windows with 5-paned transoms and 9-paned storm windows on the rear façade;
- original interior layout with central hallways and staircase, and wooden doors and trim; and
- setting within a grassed schoolyard.

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Mountain View School, circa 1930s [Revelstoke Museum & Archives #159]



School class in front of Mountain View School, ca. 1940 [British Columbia Archives BCA B-00561]

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Mountain View School, 1952 [British Columbia Archives I-22765]