



RICHARDS BLOCK

10422 - 82 AVENUE NW

CITY OF EDMONTON HISTORIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Edmonton

DESCRIPTION OF HISTORICAL PLACE

The Richards Block is a three-storey red brick building situated on a single lot on the north side of 82 (Whyte) Avenue in Edmonton's Old Strathcona Provincial Historic Area. The building embodies the Edwardian Commercial style and features such classical details as a symmetrical front façade, brick pilasters, a prominent roofline cornice with brackets and a raised parapet.

HERITAGE VALUE

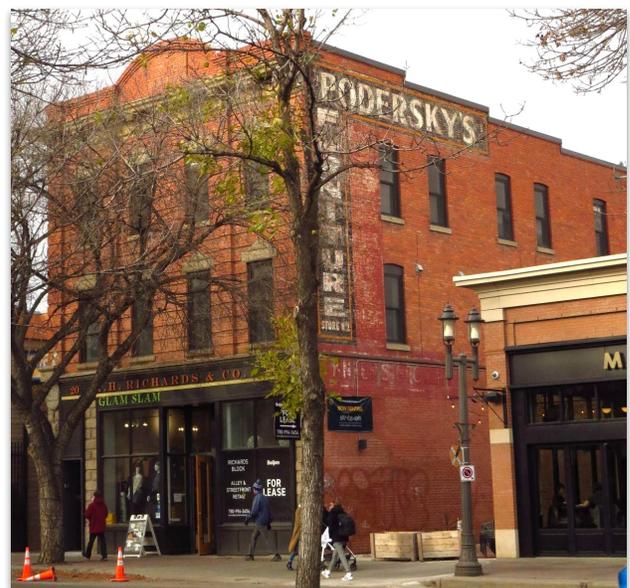
The Richards Block is municipally significant as an outstanding example of Edwardian commercial architecture and for its association with the economic, social and cultural development of Strathcona in the early twentieth century.

Completed in 1910, the Richards Block was built by A.H. Richards and Co., an early Strathcona merchant. The ground floor was used as a general store, the second floor as a dance hall, and the third floor as Lodge Rooms for the Masons and Oddfellows. In 1925, the property was purchased by A.C. Rutherford, who owned it until 1945. During 1937-38 the second and third floors were converted into twelve apartments. These activities speak to the important role that the Richards Block played in the growth and development of economic, social and cultural activity in early twentieth-century Strathcona.

The Richards Block is very solidly built. The foundation walls are two feet thick and the superstructure contains steel reinforcement. Classical details embellish the facade to give the building a distinguished appearance.

The ground level was originally faced in regularly coursed, rusticated sandstone with decorative urns in the same material placed at each end. The two upper floors are finished with brick which has been laid to imitate coursed stone. Four pilasters included in the fancy brickwork pierce through a wide cornice to reach the top of the height-enhancing parapet. Taken together these details create a pleasing, balanced effect typical of Edwardian commercial buildings.

The Richards family, the original owners of the Richards Block, had come to Strathcona in 1893 and were among its earliest merchants. A.H. Richards served as a town councillor in 1906 and his son Thomas was, for some time, Strathcona's only contractor. It is a measure of their success in the community that they could construct such a substantial building at the then considerable cost of \$30,000.





CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS

The heritage value of the Richards Block is expressed through such character-defining elements as its:

- + location on 82 (Whyte) Avenue and within the Old Strathcona Provincial Historic Area.
- + scale, form and massing;
- + red brick façade with recessed fifth course to resemble rustication;
- + symmetrical arrangement of windows and pilasters on second and third storeys;
- + brick quoins;
- + lintels topped with pediments and sandstone sills;
- + storefront cornice and roofline cornice with brackets;
- + corbelled parapet with central arch and wood “RICHARDS BLOCK” signage;
- + remnants of historic painted signs on sides and rear of building;
- + east side alley fenestration reflecting second and third floor residential apartments; and
- + cast concrete or stone pilasters flanking the storefront.



Designated as a Municipal Historic Resource through Bylaw 19002 in October 2019.

Designated as a Provincial Historic Resource in June 2019.

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