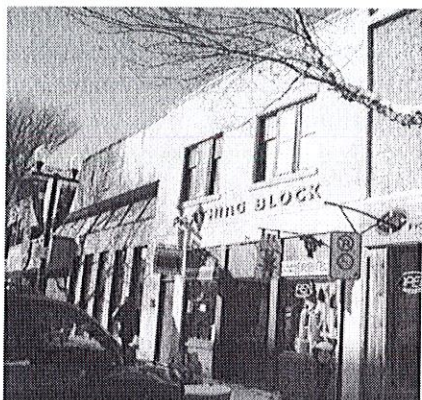


Farthing Block

4930 Ross Street



Description of the Historic Place

The two-storey Farthing Block has a flat roof, a smooth stucco finish, a recessed storefront entrance and two sets of triple, three-over-one, double-hung windows on the second storey. It is located on a busy commercial street in downtown Red Deer.

Heritage Value

The Farthing Block is significant for its association with World-War Two-era commercial development in downtown Red Deer, and for its simple modern commercial design.

The Farthing Block is significant for its association with World-War Two-era commercial development in downtown Red Deer. Photographer Hugh Farthing moved to Red Deer in 1936 and bought a photography business from local resident George Fleming. Designed by Hector MacDonald and built by general contractor W.G. Houston, the excavation for the Farthing Block began the summer of 1939 on land Farthing acquired from the City for \$500. The Second World War did not impede construction and the Farthing Block soon opened with owner Hugh Farthing's photography studio on the main floor and a six-room suite for Farthing and his wife on the second. The Farthing Block, built at a cost of \$5000, was a small part of the \$300,000 worth of new construction in Red Deer in 1939 – a record at the time and a signal that the Depression had finally ended. Farthing sold his business in 1947 to Chuck Yackimchuck, although he continued to live in the upstairs suite with his wife until 1951. Farthing moved out when the photography studio closed and a variety store run by Sims & Huget Ltd. opened in its place. The store was part of the Robinson chain of 170 stores, twenty of which were in Alberta. The Farthing Block has accommodated multiple commercial enterprises on both the first and second floors since that time, making it a valuable contribution to the downtown commercial street.

The Farthing Block is significant for its simple modern commercial design. With a flat roof and very few embellishments, this building typifies the modernist idea of form

Statements of Significance for the Downtown Red Deer Legacy Year Project

following function. Characteristic of many commercial buildings of this period, the Farthing Block had a functional plan that included commercial space on the main floor and residential space on the second storey. The modern movement began in the United States in the 1920s and by 1939, when the Farthing Block was built, the movement had begun to gain prominence on the Canadian prairies. The Farthing Block, with its simple modern design, is an important contributing resource to Red Deer's downtown core, which is an eclectic mix of built heritage reflecting Red Deer's history. The Farthing Block was recognized as contributing to the downtown Red Deer streetscape when it received exterior rehabilitation as part of Red Deer's Alberta Main Street project.

Character Defining Elements

The character defining elements expressed in the form, massing, and materials of the 1939 two-storey Farthing Block include:

- The flat roof
- The smooth stucco finish
- The stucco-clad window lintels
- The two sets of triple, three-over-one, double-hung windows on the second storey
- The storm windows on the second storey, with the central window of each set in the awning style (hinged at the top)
- The pattern, style and construction of all original window openings on the second floor
- The small, slightly corbelled cornice with stucco finish
- The door opening on the left side of the front façade