

3. Home Grill Building Statement of Significance



NEIGHBOURHOOD	Downtown	YEAR BUILT	1936
ADDRESS	4942 – 50 Street	ARCHITECT	-
LEGAL	H; 17; 3	CONTRACTOR	J.H. Murdock

DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC PLACE

The Home Grill Building is a single-storey, brick commercial building situated in the commercial district of Red Deer’s historic Downtown neighbourhood. Located on the north side of Ross Street between 49 Avenue and Gaetz Avenue, the building is identifiable by its Flemish bond, red-brick false front façade with distinct stone detailing, large display windows facing the street and its original, internal stone fireplace.

HERITAGE VALUE

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The Home Grill Building is valued for its association with Red Deer’s gradual return to economic growth in the mid-1930s. After Red Deer’s early economic boom ended in 1913, the newly inaugurated city entered a deep recession. Economic difficulties continued throughout the First World War and into the Great Depression of 1929. Red Deer was spared the devastating drought that afflicted Southern Alberta, and by mid-decade, the economy began a slow rebound. In 1936 there were 35 building permits issued, more than double the 17 approved in 1935. Sadie Collins of Calgary acquired a lot on Ross Street from the City of Red Deer in 1935. She had the original building demolished and the following year, the

Home Grill was constructed, opening for business with modern features including an electric lighting system and Frigidaire conditioning. Along with the Central Alberta Dairy Pool/Alpha Condensery built that same year, the Home Grill represented renewed possibilities for the Downtown community during a period dominated by restraint and uncertainty. It was also unusual for a woman to own a business in the 1930s, but Collins came with experience, having formerly operated refreshment stands at Sylvan Lake. She later sold the business to Jack Leedham, who in turn sold it to a syndicate in December 1947 where it reopened the following month as the Ritz Café. The Home Grill Building continues to operate as a commercial building in Downtown Red Deer, providing a direct link between the present and Downtown’s steps towards renewed prosperity during the mid-1930s.

The Home Grill Building is further valued for its distinct design, incorporating stone detailing into its vernacular commercial architecture. The Home Grill’s most prominent character element is its false front façade, a commercial building feature that created a more dynamic street-front façade than its true flat roof. Built by J.H. Murdock at a cost of \$4,275, large stones were incorporated directly into the brick along the buttresses and roof crest. This detailing helped the Home Grill to stand-out amongst larger and more ornately designed commercial buildings constructed during Red Deer’s more prosperous decades. The display windows provided ample natural light for patrons and created an inviting space for the public. The preservation

of these original elements ensures that the Home Grill Building continues to be a distinct building in Downtown Red Deer's commercial district.

Character-defining elements include, but are not limited to:

- Location on the north side of Ross Street, mid-block between 49 Avenue and Gaetz Avenue; building directly abuts the sidewalk;
- Form, scale and massing as expressed by its: single-storey height; rectangular plan; flat roof with false front façade; large display windows on the front elevation;
- Masonry construction including its: concrete foundation; Flemish bond brick cladding; stone detailing along buttresses and roof crest;
- Vernacular commercial style elements such as: simple rectangular plan; flat roof with false front façade; large display windows on the front elevation; stone detailing along buttresses and roof crest;
- Additional elements including: Internal stone chimney with red brick cladding above roofline.

The Home Grill Building maintains all aspects of integrity necessary for it to convey its significance/heritage value.

The Home Grill Building overall is in good condition with its form, scale and massing intact. The portion of the front façade below the awning has been completely remodeled, but it retains the same function of the original display windows and entrance. There is a spray-painted tag located near the crest of the false front façade, but otherwise the front bricks and stone are intact. At the rear of the building, localized plant growth between the bricks was noted. There are also signs of mortar loss in the brick portion of the chimney located above the roofline.



1947 Photograph of the Home Grill Building (Source: Red Deer and District Archives, P217).