

MISSION POST OFFICE
33191 FIRST AVENUE MISSION, BC

Description of Historic Place

The Mission City Post Office, completed in 1935, is a three storey brick and stone building occupying a prominent corner near the entrance to downtown Mission. It was the first dedicated post office to serve the growing needs of both the city and district of Mission. Although modest in stature, the Post Office is a landmark building in Mission due to its striking architecture and important role in the community.

Heritage Values

The Mission City Post Office is significant for its historical and social heritage values.

The Mission Board of Trade actively promoted the need for a permanent single-purpose post office downtown, acquiring the property prior to WW1. The Mission Post Office was completed in 1935 at a cost of about \$13,000 and dedicated in 1936. An increased demand for postal services was an indicator of the growth and prosperity of both the city and district of Mission.

In addition to the main use of the building as a postal depot, additional space in the basement was allocated for federal government offices (e.g. Ministry of Fisheries). The building was a recognized communications hub and social gathering place serving residents of both the city and district of Mission.

The main portion of the Mission Post Office is square in shape with a distinctive diagonal stairway affording public access to the building from the corner of Welton Street and 1st Avenue. The Mission City Post Office is a showcase for local materials and design elements. Built in the Art Moderne style of architecture popular for its time, the building features richly hued and locally made brick offset with decorative granite stone elements. The original plans for the building included an exterior clock. While the architect is unknown, the building contractor was Albert Bryant Catherwood who served the Corporation of the District of Mission as a councillor from 1925-1933 and as reeve from 1938-1951.

In 1955, the building underwent a major expansion to meet increasing demand for postal services including the construction of a loading platform and additions on the north and west sides of the building to accommodate additional wickets and lock boxes. As the original brick was no longer available, bricks were removed from the back of the building and used on the two side additions for a consistent appearance. In 1982, the entrance was reconstructed to make the building wheelchair accessible.

Character-Defining Elements

The historical and social heritage values of the Mission City Post Office reside in the following character-defining elements:

- Continued use of property as depot to serve mail delivery/communication needs

- and to secondarily function as a social gathering place for the community
- Prominent corner location at the entrance to Mission's downtown core

Architectural features include the following:

- Minimal setback from the street, the first floor raised above the ground, large rectangular wood framed windows inset between square masonry columns
- Art Moderne architectural style as expressed through the use of simple lines, a flat roof and an articulated main entrance
- Protruding diagonal entry featuring crenelated stonework and an inscription above the doorway "1935 Mission City Post Office". A broad horizontal stone pediment at the top of the building draws attention to the roofline.
- Extensive use of locally derived brick and stone incorporating local design elements (eg. dogwood medallions) and use of contrasting colours rich brown brick and light grey stone
- Minimal landscape treatment to soften the impact at the base of the building