

Dawson, Yukon  
**Former Courthouse**  
Front Street

## **HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

The Courthouse was built during 1900-1901 by the federal government to designs by Thomas W. Fuller. It served as the territorial courthouse until 1910. At that time it was taken over by the Royal Northwest Mounted Police and converted to offices and barracks. It was used as a hospital, operated by the Sisters of Charity, from 1954 to 1967. During this period, an addition was constructed at the north end. The building is a designated National Historic Site. It was acquired by Parks Canada in 1967 and has been used to house the administrative offices of Klondike National Historic Sites since then. The Canadian Parks Service, Environment Canada is custodian of the building. See FHBRO Building Report 87-63.

### **Reasons for Designation**

The former Courthouse was designated Classified because of its important historic associations, its architecture, the high standards of craftsmanship exhibited in its construction, and its importance as a Dawson landmark.

Historically, it is associated with the establishment of a federal presence in the Northwest and the exercise of Canadian sovereignty. It is one of two remaining examples of early territorial courts in western Canada.

The former Courthouse is an excellent and rare example of a turn-of-the-century courthouse executed in wood. A modest but imposing classical design, the building's exterior shows careful attention to composition and proportion.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of the former Courthouse resides in its formal, classically inspired design and detailing.

The design is proportioned and detailed as the more substantial masonry courthouses of southern Canada. The pedimented projecting bays flanking the centrally placed main entrance are the principal components of the composition; a large cupola reinforces the building's symmetry. The north addition, while it creates an imbalance in the façade, is compatible and discrete. The secondary elements and details - column capitals, mouldings, paired windows, and turned railings - contribute to the overall formality and strength of the design.

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The building has undergone interior alterations as its use changed, however, these appear to have been minor. The former Courthouse appears to retain the main elements of its plan and original interior finishes of varnished fir, although concealed behind more recent finishes. The building would benefit from investigation to identify original features for possible inclusion in future alterations of the building. The stair to the second floor is of particular note.