

Dawson City, Yukon  
Ruby's Place  
233 Second Avenue

#### HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

Ruby's Place, Dawson City, was built in 1902 as a lodging house probably for Mrs. Eva Ogara. The two cabins at the rear may predate the lodging house by a year or more. The designer of the various buildings is unknown. External modifications (none of which can be dated with any certainty) include the removal of an exterior stair at the rear, the boarding up of one of a pair of rear doors and the boarding up of one of a pair of front entrances. Internal modifications (also undateable) include the insertion of a quarter-turn staircase with landing, the rearrangement of partitions and doors, and other minor changes. The buildings are owned by Environment Canada, the Canadian Parks Service, Environment Canada. See Building Report 88-12.

#### Reasons for Designation

Ruby's Place and the two cabins were designated Recognized. The result of the evaluation is somewhat unusual in that a Recognized class was achieved with relatively low scores for all but one criteria. In the case of site, where the historical relationship between building and its associated landscape was considered, it was agreed that while some minor changes have occurred, the character has been retained.

The theme most identified with the building is prostitution. In the period 1935 to 1962, Ruby's Place was Dawson's premier house of prostitution. Of all the residents of 233 Second Avenue, only Ruby Scott, the madame, had lasting significance. Ruby Scott became a pillar of the community much beloved by Dawson's more "respectable" men, women and children. Her generosity was legendary, as was her reputation as a cook, hostess and "a good old soul."

In architectural terms, the most that can be said of the building is that it is a good example of the type, construction and handling of materials in Dawson's attempt at Edwardian grandeur.

Throughout its existence the building has remained compatible with the neighbourhood character. Its conspicuousness within the townsite derives from its former function rather than its present form.

#### Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the main building derives from the generally symmetrical, false-fronted street elevation notable for two dramatic, yet primitive oriel windows. Internally the building is notable for the ground floor plan arrangement which has traditionally served a dual purpose - in 1902

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an office or business in the north half and an apartment in the south half - in 1935 a "parlor" in the north half and a private apartment for madame in the south half.

The second floor retains the essential elements of the 1902 centre hall boarding house plan, as modified in later years as sleeping-chambers for a "parlor house."

Considering the acknowledged association of the main building with prostitution, and the madame, Ruby Scott, the most appropriate treatment for the main building would be rehabilitation or restoration utilizing the present opening pattern and room arrangement, or where sufficient information existed, recovering an appearance it had between 1935 and 1962.

Until such time as proper research has been done on the two cabins in the rear yard, the most appropriate treatment for them would be interim stabilization.

1989.10.31