

Slocan Mercantile General Store

Other names: Sandon Hunter-Kendrick Block, Sandon Museum

Historic Place

The Slocan Mercantile General Store is a two-storey brick building located on the north bank of Carpenter Creek at the upper end of the remote historic townsite of Sandon. Sandon is a former mining town located in the high narrow Carpenter Valley in the Selkirk Mountain Range above and east of the lakeside towns of New Denver and Silverton in the Slocan Valley, British Columbia.

Values

The Slocan Mercantile General Store is valued as a rare commercial building dating from the time of the immediate rebuilding of Sandon town centre following the 1900 fire that destroyed most of the town, including Reco Street, the original main street. The General Store is important for its brick material and detailing typical of a commercial building of stature in its era seen in its simple corniced and ornamented front facade, and its un-ornamented back and side facades.

The existence of such a substantial building in this remote location of BC provokes wonder at the industry of the early miners and settlers of the province and reflects the riches that accrued from mining silver in the West Kootenay region. The building is an important reminder that Sandon was once known as the Monte Carlo of North America.

Together with other buildings that also front onto the original Main Street, the Slocan Mercantile General Store is valued as a tangible reminder of the early layout and infrastructure of Sandon, and the grandeur of the town during its heyday. Still in its original location, the General Store is important for its role in understanding the function of Sandon's Main Street right-of-way with its unique Carpenter Creek flume, the timber structure built in the same era as the General Store to guide the creek beneath Main Street and through the town.

As a remnant of the Sandon rebuilding effort that began in 1900, the General Store has historical value as a tangible link to the economic history of the Slocan region's booming silver mining industry in the late-19th and very early 20th century, an economy robust enough to enable the rebuilding of the town centre in a matter

of a few years, including innovations such as sophisticated hydroelectric power generation plants and the Carpenter Creek flume.

The building is important for its history of physical adaptations that has allowed it to remain a valuable social and cultural asset for the community, such as its present use as a museum. It is also particularly valued for its role in housing Japanese Canadians interned from the Pacific Coast during the Second World War, an event marked by physical alterations such as new windows to facilitate its use as a residential building.

The Slocan Mercantile General Store has social and cultural value as one of the enduring and iconic structures remaining from Sandon's early years, as a centre for the preservation and display of artifacts from Sandon's history, and as the focus of Sandon's revitalization efforts in the 1980s, which culminated in its provincial designation as an historic site in 1991 and its rehabilitation in 1992. The General Store is

also valued for being the home and symbol of the Sandon Historical Society, and a centre for much community volunteer activity over the last several decades.

Character-defining Elements

- Location on historical Main Street of Sandon
- Physical association with and alignment to remnants of timber flume with front of building facing old flume alignment
- Load-bearing masonry (brick) exterior walls, with more finished faced brick on the front facade
- Stone foundation walls
- Stabilizing concrete upgrades to the foundation and basement
- Front facade composition, detailing and ornamentation, including:
- Symmetrical front facade with centrally located front porch
- Moulded cornice
- Lightly ornamented parapet
- Upper wall panels of sawtooth pattern brickwork
- Storefront window and door openings with robust wood frames, trims and mouldings
- Roof sloping down from front to back
- Alterations to east facade brickwork completed in the 1940s to form new window openings to accommodate non-original residential uses of the building
- Interior finishing in period detail and use of compatible material where original material is missing

Sources

BC Archives GR-0304. Sandon BC

BC Archives GR-1548. British Columbia Heritage Conservation Branch Restoration Services Division. Box 10, File 5 Sandon 18-00-04.

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Sandon Museum and Historical Society. <http://www.sandonmuseum.ca/>