

W.G. Cameron Building

579 Johnson Street, Victoria, British Columbia, V8W, Canada

FORMALLY RECOGNIZED:	1995/01/19
CONSTRUCTION DATE:	1888/01/01
LISTED ON THE CANADIAN REGISTER:	2005/11/15
JURISDICTION:	British Columbia
RECOGNITION AUTHORITY:	Local Governments (BC)
RECOGNITION STATUTE:	Local Government Act, s.954
RECOGNITION TYPE:	Community Heritage Register
RECOGNITION DATE:	1995/01/19
THEME - CATEGORY AND TYPE:	Developing Economies Trade and Commerce
FUNCTION - CATEGORY AND TYPE	
CURRENT:	Commerce / Commercial Services Shop or Wholesale Establishment
HISTORIC:	
ARCHITECT / DESIGNER:	Fisher and Wilson
BUILDER:	Elford and Smith
LOCATION OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION:	City of Victoria Planning and Development Dept.
FED/PROV/TERR IDENTIFIER:	DcRu-826

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC PLACE

The W.G. Cameron Building is a two-storey brick commercial building located on the corner of an alley on the south side of the 500 block of Johnson Street. It is distinguishable by its decorative façade, intact cast-iron columns and wooden storefront, and a name plate bearing the name "W.G. Cameron" in its prominent cornice.

HERITAGE VALUE

The heritage value of the W.G. Cameron building lies in its intact condition and the contribution it makes to the continuity of this block of Johnson Street and the historic character of Victoria's Old Town District. It also has a notable association with its first owner.

Constructed in 1888 by architects Fisher and Wilson, this commercial building is valued for its retention of elements which made it one of the most modern and functional buildings in the city at the time of its construction: an attractive street presence, and well-lit interior spaces. Situated next to an alleyway and with a Klondike-era courtyard at rear, it is of value to the commercial core of Victoria's downtown because it helps to retain and define the infrastructure that supported the period of significant development and growth which occurred during the latter years of the nineteenth century as the city became the economic hub of British Columbia. The practical and appealing design of this building is a valuable reflection on the enterprising success of its first owner, Californian W. G. Cameron, who operated his "Mechanic's Cash Clothing Store" here until 1911, and went on to become a city alderman, Land Commissioner, and a local MP.

Source: City of Victoria Planning and Development Dept.

CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS

The character-defining elements of the W.G. Cameron Building include:

- location on an alleyway, which allows for windows on the east façade.
- contribution of the exterior brick walls to the Klondike-era courtyard at the rear.
- modest scale and two-storey form.
- sense of cohesiveness with other historic buildings along the south side of Johnson Street.
- relatively intact storefront, featuring such elements as cast-iron columns and detailing, and large windows with transoms, which allow for a well-lit interior.
- intact and decorative façade detailing, including incised scrolled ornamentation and the "W.G. Cameron" name plate, the prominent cornice, and the arch above the two central windows.
- Upper storey double-hung wooden-sash windows.
- Interior spaces which support the heritage character of its 1888 design by architects Fisher and Wilson.
- integrity of the building envelope, which identifies it as a nineteenth-century commercial building.



Exterior view of the W.G. Cameron Building; City of Victoria, Berdine J. Jonker, 2005.



Johnson Street façade



Exterior view of the W.G Cameron Building; City of Victoria, Berdine J. Jonker, 2005.