

Riordan House - 1921

689 Winnipeg Street

The Riordan House is a two and one half storey Arts & Crafts home constructed in 1921. The side-gabled first storey is dominated by broad overhanging eaves with exposed rafters, a porte-cochere with battered Craftsman piers on the south side and a porch entry with decorative roof on the north side. The historic site is located on a prominent corner lot and includes the original garage and mature landscaping.

Riordan House is valued as an expression of the kind of architecturally designed homebuilt by prominent businessmen in the post World War I era. The home evokes a period of economic optimism, expressed in its rich architectural detailing, as built by its original owners, the Riordan family, who lived in it from 1921 to 1940. The house is also valued for its contribution to the continuity of an elite precinct in this area which housed doctors, lawyers, and merchants, many of whom built large homes; this is evidenced by its second owner, Dr. Wickett, who owned it until 1980.

The house is also notable for its association with David Riordan, a prominent hotel owner and reputed bootlegger. It is rumoured that liquor was hidden in the basement of the Riordan house during Prohibition. The richly detailed interior, which is virtually in original condition, is a reflection of the social prominence and personality of its original owner.

Its association with Penticton's hospitality industry continued with its use during the 1980s alternating between a teahouse and restaurant, and since 1991 as a Bed and Breakfast.

Key elements that define the heritage character of the Riordan House include:

- The prominent corner lot location
- The bold architectural form which expresses Arts and Crafts and Craftsman principles
- The porte-cochere
- The decorative porch entrance
- The deep overhanging eaves
- Craftsman elements including the use of vertical elements which contrast with and break the horizontal planes (upper storey massing of gables, tall chimney, battered piers on the porte-cochere, and heavy porch supports reaching to the ground)
- Exposed rafter ends and decorative knee braces
- Upper storey dormers
- Rich interior woodwork of Nova Scotia fir and oak
- Original built-in cupboards and window seats
- Original windows, doors, frames, and mouldings
- Association with a colourful local character, David Riordan
- Original concrete wall around perimeter of the property
- Original rear garage
- Original landscaping and mature trees
- Original boiler and hot water heating system

