

**387 Bowron Avenue
Dr. G. R. Baker House - 1936**



Front Elevation



East Elevation



Rear Elevation

Description

Dr. G. R. Baker House is a delightful one-and-a-half storey wood framed house built in 1936 located on a slight hill on the northwest corner of Bowron Avenue and Kinchant Street in North Quesnel, BC. The historic place includes the building and the parcel of land it occupies.

Heritage Value

Dr. G. R. Baker House is located in North Quesnel which is an older residential neighbourhood in the city. While not in its original form, the house is a physical reminder of the people who shaped the development of Quesnel. The house was built by well-known builder Harry Joyce.

The house is named for Dr. Gerald Rumsey Baker. Dr. Baker came to Quesnel to attend to an emergency operation. He was to stay in Quesnel for one year, but he never left. He was originally from Ireland and completed his internship at St. Bartholomew's Medical and Surgical Hospital in England. Before the age of the automobile, Dr. Baker made his house calls on horseback until he purchased a Model-T automobile. Dr. Baker was affectionately known in the area as 'Paddy'. He was an avid outdoorsman who enjoyed hunting and fishing with his friends, as well as participating in boxing and football. Once, Dr. Baker apprehended a wanted murderer and received an award for his heroic actions.

In 1915, Dr. Baker married Ellen Elizabeth Howison (nee English). Ellen was known in the area as 'Nellie'. She took an anaesthesia course at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver, BC to assist her husband during surgery. Nellie fainted assisting in her first surgery, but went on to become the 'Nightingale of the Cariboo'. In 1930, Nellie and Dr. Baker divorced. Nellie is recognized for her contribution to the development of the community with a street named in her honour.

Dr. Baker married his second wife Helene. They had this house built for them soon after they were married. Until this house was completed in 1936, they rented 579 St. Laurent from the Norwood brothers. Dr. Baker was one of the area's most valued and loved citizens. In 1956, the G. R. Baker Memorial Hospital was built in his honour; unfortunately, he did not live to see its opening. The Baker family is recognized for their contribution to the development of the community with a street named in their honour.

Another occupant of the house was Leonard B. Rolph who moved to Quesnel in 1920 at the age of eighteen. He worked with his father Nathaniel Rolph at Murdock & Company dry goods store. Leonard unloaded the dry goods, stocked the shelves, and packaged orders for shipment. He left Quesnel when the railway arrived in 1921 and Murdock & Company closed. In 1928, Leonard returned to Quesnel to work as a bookkeeper for Johnston Brothers Motors. He also

repaired tires, sold gas, and performed other shop duties. In 1929, he married Muriel Eden in the Church of St. John the Divine Anglican Church on Kinchant Street.

When Leonard's father retired from the North Cariboo Department of Public Works in 1931, Leonard became the District Clerk. Leonard was a member of Branch 94 of the Royal Canadian Legion and he held various positions on the Hospital Board. During WWII, Leonard enlisted in the 1st Battalion Canadian Scottish Regiment and served overseas from 1941 to 1946. When he returned to Quesnel, he resumed his career with the Department of Public Works in Finance and later, he became the Assessor of Lands and Improvements. The Rolph family is recognized for their contribution to the development of the community with a street named in their honour.

Character-Defining Elements

The character-defining elements of Dr. G. R. Baker House include:

- an excellent example of a delightful one-and-a-half storey wood framed 1930s house with charming details that has maintained its original character;
- the half storey has an arched window in the peak to allow for light in the room upstairs;
- an attached garage and shed are built in a compatible style with similar details including the shingle siding and roofing materials;
- cedar shingle siding;
- high pitched gable roof;
- varied roof line;
- central chimney;
- rectangular form with projections;
- covered storm porch.