

**736 Reid Street  
Palmer House – 1935**



Front Elevation



North and Front Elevation



Front and South Elevation

**Description**

Palmer House is a charming one-and-a-half storey wood frame house built in 1935 located on the east side of Reid Street in North Quesnel, BC. The historic place includes the building and the parcel of land it occupies.

**Heritage Value**

Palmer 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 contractor Stephen Hilborn.

The house is named for Norman and Alice (Higdon) Palmer. Norman was from Ontario and came to Quesnel to work at the Department of Public Works until he operated the light plant at the Cariboo Hotel. When he finished working at the light plant he returned to the Department of Public Works for seven years. Alice was the daughter of pioneers, David and Amy Higdon, who came to Quesnel in 1909 by steamboat. Alice and Norman were married in Quesnel in 1927.

Norman had many employment experiences. When he finished working at the Department of Public Works, he did some mining along the Quesnel River, hauled diesel to the Gold Quartz Mine in Wells, and was a mechanic for McNaughton and McMann. In WWII, Norman served overseas from 1940 to 1945. When he returned to Quesnel, Norman went back to work at the garage as shop foreman until his retirement in 1967. The Palmer and Higdon families are recognized for their contribution to the development of the community with streets named in their honour.

In the 1950s, Hie Foun Chan lived here. In Quesnel, Hie Foun Chan was known as Willie Funn. Willie came to Canada from China at the age of 17. He was sponsored by well-respected local businessman, Wan Kee during the time when the Canadian government was charging a \$500 head tax on Chinese immigrants. Once Willie cleared customs, he walked hundreds of miles from the BC Coast to Quesnel. Willie Funn, Wan Kee, and Gouie Chan became business partners in the Nugget Café located on the north side of Barlow Avenue between Front and Reid Streets which was known as ‘Chinatown’.

Their business was destroyed along with twelve others in the “Chinatown Fire” in 1925. Two men who were boarding in the apartment above the Nugget Café died in the fire. Willie Funn, Wan Kee, and Gouie Chan received financial assistance from C. D. Hoy. C.D. purchased the Globe Hotel for the business partners who changed the name to the Nugget Hotel. During the 1930s, Willie often gave free meals to people who were experiencing hard times. His kindness was often repaid years later by those who remembered his generosity.

### **Character-Defining Elements**

The character-defining elements of Palmer House include:

- a unique contribution to the streetscape;
- an example of one of the many one-and-a-half storey wood frame houses built in Quesnel during the 1930s;
- a positive relationship with its surrounding houses
- a cross gable on the façade;
- a rectangular shape with attached single storey addition;
- a projecting covered central entrance with pediment;
- a window in the half storey peak;
- a asymmetrical façade with two gable projections
- a large picture window.
- a brick chimney.