

Old Canadian Pacific Airlines

MAP ID: C-65

DESIGNATION: HERITAGE SITE

ADDRESS: 3502 Wylie Road (Lot 1, Block C, Plan 70)

CURRENT OWNER: Alain & Ghislaine Rossignol

OCCUPANT:

CURRENT USE: Residential

BUILT: 1946

CONSTRUCTION:

Frame, 20' x 96'



DESCRIPTIVE HISTORY:

Canadian Pacific Airlines built this as a floatbase (offices and staff quarters) in the summer of 1946 to service the booming community of Yellowknife and its active gold mining exploration. Ken Razzel was local manager (1945-1946), followed by Gord Scramstad (1946-1948), Fred Miller (1948-1949), and Don Thompson. In 1947, the offices of Amalgamated Transportation Limited, managed by A.E. Tuck, was also located here. In October 1949, the float charter of Canadian Pacific Airlines was taken over by Yellowknife Airways Limited when CPA decided to focus on commercial service using wheeled aircraft between Edmonton and Yellowknife. Jake Woolgar was local agent for Yellowknife Airways and Matt Berry was manager. They moved their offices into this building in December 1949. Associated Airways Limited acquired Yellowknife Airways in July 1951 and took over the Old Town floatbase. Tommy Fox was president of Associated, and Harry Herbert was local agent/manager, followed by A.N. Westergaard (1951-1953), Merv Hardie (1953), Dave Floyd (1954-1955, and Syd Jacklin (1955-1956). Associated was acquired by Pacific Western Airlines in May 1956. Both Associated and PWA also maintained a large fleet of land-based aircraft at the YK Airport and float charter operations were a relatively small part of their business. A.C. Campbell became base manager in 1958, followed by Lorne Brown in 1959. Pacific Western Airlines eventually created a spin-off company to deal with float plane operations, and Northward Aviation Limited was formed by PWA in March 1966, with Stan McMillan as general manager. Northward operated Twin Otter aircraft with scheduled services up the Mackenzie River Valley and to the booming Coppermine River mineral district. Brian Robertson was base manager in 1970. The company was renamed Northward Airlines Limited in 1972 and continued bush flying service until it declared bankruptcy in 1980. Northward had earlier sold the Old Town float base to Arnie Steinwand of Air Dogrib in 1978 who continued to occupy it in the 1980s.

David Metclaffe bought the property in 1988 after it had sat vacant for some time and has been occupied by transients. He proposed making repairs to utilize it as a historic floatbase once again, but the City of Yellowknife at first refused to allow renovations unless the building was moved 50 feet off the Wylie Road right-of-way, so that the road could be widened into a two-way street. Metclaffe argued the cost to move the building was substantial and the building would lose its historic character, and the City agreed to negotiate an encroachment agreement, and it was designated a Heritage Site in 1992. The building was renovated and Metclaffe leased it to Venture Air for a short time. He then leased it to Victor MacIntosh and Doug Strader who opened the "Arctic Brewery Company Limited" in 1992, the NWT's first micro brewery. The bar was called "The Bush Pilot Brew Pub". Twenty-five local investors bought into the plan, but the business could not make enough money and the quality of beer was poor. John Dalton then leased the building and opened "The Old Town Pub" in 1996. It featured an airplane wing as the serving bar. It too could not make enough money as a summer-only venture and closed in June 1997. David Metclaffe converted the building into a family residence and lived here until he left town in 2011.

Certificates of Title (Lot 1, Block C, Plan 70): Associated Airways Ltd, April 2, 1954 > Northward Airlines Ltd., June 20, 1975 > Steinwands Transport Ltd., April 27, 1978 > Anvid MacBeaver Ltd, August 25, 1988 > Alain & Ghislaine Rossignol, June 13, 2011

NOTES:

The mural on the street facing side covers up a hole ripped from the building when the Arctic Brewery people forcibly removed equipment following its closure.

REFERENCES:

News of the North, March 30, 1946; October 21, 1949; Dec. 9, 1949; July 20, 1951; Feb. 10, 1956; March 11, 1956; March 10, 1966; March 21, 1980
The Yellowknifer, May 4, 1978; August 24, 1988; February 15, 1989; March 1, 1989; June 11, 1997
GNWT Land Titles; NWT Phone Books
Heritage Building Inventory for Old Town, 1986