

Subject: Designation of the Bronson Centre, 211 Bronson Avenue under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*

File Number: ACS2023-PRE-RHU-0046

**Report to Built Heritage Committee on 6 November 2023
and Council 22 November 2023**

Submitted on October 25, 2023 by Court Curry, Director, Right of Way, Heritage, and Urban Design Services, Planning, Real Estate and Economic Development

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Ward: Somerset (14)

Objet: Désignation du Centre Bronson, situé au 211, avenue Bronson, en vertu de la partie IV de la *Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario*

Dossier : ACS2023-PRE-RHU-0046

Rapport au Comité du patrimoine bâti

le 6 novembre 2023

et au Conseil le 22 novembre 2023

Soumis le 25 octobre 2023 par Court Curry, Directeur, Services des emprises, du patrimoine, et du design urbain, Services de la planification, des biens immobiliers et du développement économique

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Quartier: Somerset (14)

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Built Heritage Committee recommend that Council:

1. Issue a Notice of Intention to Designate the Bronson Centre, 211 Bronson Avenue under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* according to the Statement of Cultural Heritage Value attached as Document 4.
2. Upon service of the Notice of Intention to Designate according to Section 29 (4) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, issue a heritage permit under Section 33 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, to permit the ongoing rehabilitation of the building as described in Document 5.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité du patrimoine bâti recommande au Conseil :

1. d'émettre un avis d'intention de désigner le Centre Bronson, situé au 211, avenue Bronson, en vertu de la partie IV de la *Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario*, conformément à la Déclaration de la valeur sur le plan du patrimoine culturel présentée dans le document 4 ci-joint.
2. de délivrer, après avoir distribué l'avis d'intention de désigner le Centre en vertu du paragraphe 29 (4) de la *Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario*, un permis patrimonial en vertu de l'article 33 de la *Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario*, en vue de permettre la réfection du bâtiment en cours, comme le décrit le document 5.

BACKGROUND

This report has been prepared because designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* (OHA) must be approved by City Council after consultation with the Built Heritage Committee.

The Bronson Centre, 211 Bronson Avenue is a well-known landmark in Centretown that currently functions as a hub for social services, arts and entertainment. The building occupies the entire frontage along Bronson Avenue between Lisgar and Nepean Streets in Centretown (Document 1). The building was constructed in phases from 1928 – 1962. From 1928 until 1994, the building housed Immaculata High School. Since 1996 it has been known as the Bronson Centre (see Document 2 for Photos.)

The property was listed on the City of Ottawa Heritage Register in 2020 after being identified as a Significant Resource in the Centretown Heritage Inventory completed for the City by ERA Architects Inc as part of the Centretown Heritage Study. Changes to

the *Ontario Heritage Act* through Bill 23 will result in the removal of the property from the City's Heritage Register if Council does not issue a Notice of Intention to Designate the property by December 31, 2024. Further, Council will not be able to re-list the property for five years after this date.

DISCUSSION

Recommendation 1:

The Official Plan, the Provincial Policy Statement and the *Ontario Heritage Act* all provide policy direction related to the designation of individual properties under Part IV of the *OHA*.

Official Plan

The Official Plan has policies related to cultural heritage in Section 4.5, Cultural Heritage and Archaeology. Section 4.5.1(3) states: "Individual buildings, structures, and sites shall be designated as properties of cultural heritage value under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*."

Provincial Policy Statement (2020)

Section 2.6.1 of the Provincial Policy Statement (2020) contains the following policy regarding the protection of cultural heritage resources: "Significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved."

Ontario Heritage Act

Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* provides municipalities with the authority to designate properties of cultural heritage value. Section 29 of the *OHA* sets out the process for the designation of individual buildings. It requires:

- that Council consult with its municipal heritage committee, and
- that the official Notice of Intention to Designate served on the owner and the Ontario Heritage Trust contain a description of the property and its heritage attributes, as well as a statement explaining the cultural heritage value or interest of the property and a statement that a notice of objection may be served on the clerk within 30 days after the date of publication of the notice of intention in a newspaper.

Per the "*Ontario Heritage Act* Alternative Notice Policy", the Notice of Intention to Designate will be published on the City's website in both official languages. Document 4 contains the Statement of Cultural Heritage Value for this property.

Ontario Regulation 09/06

Regulation 09/06 (see Document 3) establishes criteria to determine if a property is of cultural heritage value or interest. A property may be designated under Section 29 of the *OHA* if it meets two or more of the nine criteria set out in the regulation.

In 2021, the property owner retained Bray Heritage to prepare a Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report (CHER). The report, which was submitted to the City for information provides an overview of the design, history and contextual values of the property.

The property owner and author of the CHER have given the City permission to use this report in support of the recommended designation. The CHER is attached as Document 6. The information included in the CHER formed the basis of the Statement of Cultural Heritage Value prepared by staff and attached as Document 4 of this report.

Based on the information in the CHER, staff have determined that the property meets six of the nine criteria for designation under Regulation 09/06.

A brief analysis of the applicable criteria under O.Reg 9/06 is provided below:

The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.

The Bronson Centre has design value as a representative example of an institutional building, constructed in phases between 1929 and 1962. The original Immaculata High School, constructed in 1929 at the corner of Lisgar Street and Bronson Avenues is a representative example of the Collegiate Gothic style, a popular style for institutional buildings across North America from the early-to-mid-twentieth century. The 1948 and 1962 additions to the building are also clad in stone and represent a compatible evolution of the original building.

The property has historical or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.

The Bronson Centre has historical value for its direct associations with the Grey Nuns, and Immaculata High School. The Grey Nuns are an important religious order in the history of Ottawa, first arriving in 1845 to provide nursing services under the direction of Mother Elisabeth Bruyère. The building is also significant for its association with Immaculata High School which was an important component of the Catholic school system in 20th century Ottawa and continues in its current location on Main Street. Since

1996 the building has housed the Bronson Centre, an important community hub for social services, arts and music in Ottawa.

The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.

The Bronson Centre is associated with several significant 20th century architects in Ottawa including W.E. Noffke who designed the original building in 1929, architecture firm Hazelgrove and Lithwick who designed the 1948 wing and architects Balharrie, Helmer and Morin who were responsible for the 1962 expansion.

The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.

The Bronson Centre is important in defining the historic character of the north end of Bronson Avenue, a prominent street in the Centretown neighbourhood. It forms part of a transitional zone along Bronson Avenue as the street transitions from low-profile to high rise character.

The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.

As a Catholic school for almost 70 years, the building is also visually and historically linked to the development of significant institutions in this part of Centretown including St. Vincent's Hospital (1932), Erskine Presbyterian Church (1905), and MacPhail Baptist Church (1893).

The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.

The Bronson Centre has contextual value as a landmark on Bronson Avenue both for its size, spanning the entire block of Bronson Avenue between Nepean and Lisgar Streets and for its function as both a school and now a community hub.

Recommendation 2:

Once a Notice of Intention to Designate a property under Part IV of the OHA is issued according to Section 29 (4) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, there is requirement to obtain a heritage permit for any alterations that may impact the identified heritage attributes of the building.

Since March 2023, the Bronson Centre has been undertaking required rehabilitation work to the stone cladding on the south and west façades of the building under the advice of the professional engineers. This work has included the removal of the exterior

limestone veneer from the 1962 wing as well as the removal and dismantling of the portico and significant portions of the 1929 façade in order to address concerns about their integrity; it found that the veneer had separated from the underlying structure and that important supporting stones and metal infrastructure had failed. The Bronson Centre has indicated that once the issues have been addressed and repaired, the façades will be reconstructed based on digital scans of the building taken prior to the commencement of the work. The majority of the stones from the 1929 wing have been carefully documented and stored for reinstatement; where reinstatement is not possible, new stones are to be cut from the original quarry as part of the reconstruction. The veneer of the 1962 wing is to be replaced in-kind.

As colder weather approaches, on the advice of their engineer, the owner is implementing measures to protect the building while work proceeds, including the installation of temporary supports, scaffolding and insulting tarps. The work is expected to continue into next year, based on funding.

So as to not interrupt the ongoing work as a result of the designation process, staff recommend that Council authorize the issuance of a heritage permit to allow for the ongoing work to continue. A description of work is included in Document 5. Any work outside of this scope would be subject to additional permit processes in the future.

Conclusion

The Bronson Centre, 211 Bronson Avenue is a significant heritage resource in Centretown serving as an important neighbourhood institution for almost a century. Staff recommend designation of this property as it meets six of nine criteria under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Further, staff recommend the issuance of a heritage permit to allow the ongoing rehabilitation work to continue.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications associated with implementing the report recommendations.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)

The Councillor is aware of the proposed designation.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE(S) COMMENTS

This section contains any comments or recommendations made by one or more Advisory Committees relating to this report.

CONSULTATION

The property owner is aware of and supports the proposed designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

There are no accessibility impacts.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no Asset Management Implications associated with this report.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no rural implications.

APPLICATION PROCESS TIMELINE STATUS

There is no statutory timeline associated with this report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 Location Map

Document 2 Photos

Document 3 Ontario Regulation 09.06

Document 4 Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Document 5 Description of Rehabilitation Work

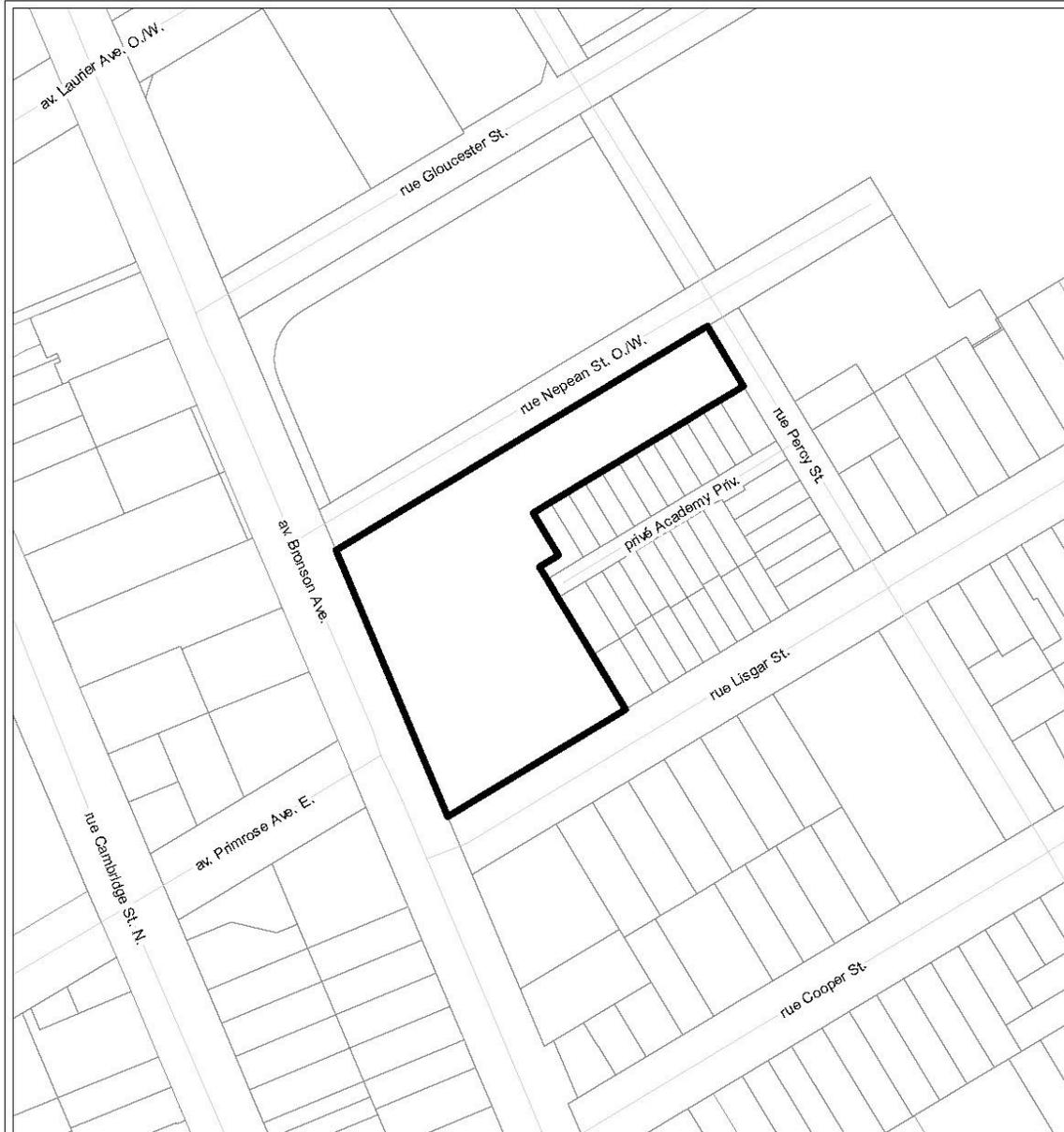
Document 6 Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report

DISPOSITION

If Council does not approve the recommendation, no further steps are required. If Council proceeds with the issuance of a Notice of Intention to Designate for the property located at 211 Bronson Avenue, several actions must be taken:

- 1) Heritage Planning Branch, Planning Real Estate and Economic Development Department, to prepare the Notice of Intention to Designate. Office of the City Clerk, Council and Committee Services to notify the property owner and the Ontario Heritage Trust (10 Adelaide Street East, third Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M5C 1J3) of Council's decision to issue a Notice of Intention to Designate Bronson Avenue under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- 2) Heritage Planning Branch, Planning Real Estate and Economic Development Department to ensure publication of the Notice of Intention to Designate according to the requirements of Section 29 the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- 3) If the City Clerk receives a Notice of Objection under Section 29(5) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* within thirty days of the publication of the Notice of Intention to Designate, the Heritage Planning Branch, Planning, Real Estate and Economic Development Department is to prepare a report regarding the objection for consideration by Council within 90 days after conclusion of the objection period, according to Section 29(6) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- 4) If the City Clerk does not receive any Notice of Objection under Section 29(5) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* within thirty days of the publication of the Notice of Intention to Designate, or if City Council decides not to withdraw the notice of intention to designate the property after an objection has been served, the Heritage Planning Branch, Planning, Real Estate and Economic Development Department, is to prepare the designation by-law, under the authority of the approval of this report and Legal Services to submit to City Council for enactment within 120 days of the publication of the Notice of Intention to Designate as prescribed in Section 29(8) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- 5) Office of the City Clerk, Council and Committee Services to cause a copy of the by-law together with a statement explaining the cultural heritage value or interest of the property and a description of the heritage attributes of the property, to be served on the owner of the property and on the Trust according to the requirements of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Heritage Planning Branch, Planning, Real Estate and Economic Development Department to ensure publication of the notice of the by-law in the newspaper according to the requirements Section 29(8)(4) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Document 1 – Location Map



		LOCATION MAP / PLAN DE LOCALISATION HERITAGE / PATRIMOINE	
D09-01-BRON211	23-0927-L		211 av. Bronson Ave.
I:\CO\2023\Heritage\Bronson_211			
<small> ©Parcel data is owned by Teranet Enterprises Inc. and its suppliers All rights reserved. May not be produced without permission. THIS IS NOT A PLAN OF SURVEY. </small>			
<small> ©Les données de parcelles appartiennent à Teranet Enterprises Inc. et à ses fournisseurs. Tous droits réservés. Ne peut être reproduit sans autorisation. CE CI N'EST PAS UN PLAN D'ARPENTAGE </small>			
REVISION / RÉVISION - 2023 / 10 / 11			
			 <small>NOT TO SCALE</small>

Document 2 – Photos

View from Bronson Avenue, at the north west corner of the property, showing the connection between the 1952 nurses' residence and 1962 Wing.



View of the 1962 Wing on Bronson Avenue.



View of the 1929 School Building at the corner of Bronson Ave and Lisgar St.



View of the 1948 Dr. D.A Kearns Memorial Wing from Lisgar Street.



View of the rear of the 1952 nurses' residence.



View of the parking lot on site, to the rear of the building.

Document 3 – Ontario Regulation 9/06**Ontario Heritage Act****ONTARIO REGULATION 9/06****CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST**

Consolidation Period: From January 1, 2023 to the e-Laws currency date.

Last amendment: 569/22.

This is the English version of a bilingual regulation.

Criteria, s. 27 (3) (b) of the Act

1. (1) The criteria set out in subsection (2) are prescribed for the purposes of clause 27 (3) (b) of the Act. O. Reg. 569/22, s. 1.

(2) Property that has not been designated under Part IV of the Act may be included in the register referred to in subsection 27 (1) of the Act on and after January 1, 2023 if the property meets one or more of the following criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest:

1. The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.
2. The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.
3. The property has design value or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.
4. The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.
5. The property has historical value or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.
6. The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.
7. The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.
8. The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.
9. The property has contextual value because it is a landmark. O. Reg. 569/22, s. 1.

(3) For clarity, subsection (2) does not apply in respect of a property that has not been designated under Part IV but was included in the register as of January 1, 2023. O. Reg. 569/22, s. 1.

Criteria, s. 29 (1) (a) of the Act

2. (1) The criteria set out in subsections (2) and (3) are prescribed for the purposes of clause 29 (1) (a) of the Act. O. Reg. 569/22, s. 1.

(2) Section 1, as it read immediately before January 1, 2023, continues to apply in respect of a property for which a notice of intention to designate it was given under subsection 29 (1.1) of the Act after January 24, 2006 and before January 1, 2023. O. Reg. 569/22, s. 1.

(3) In respect of a property for which a notice of intention to designate it is given under subsection 29 (1.1) of the Act on or after January 1, 2023, the property may be designated under section 29 of the Act if it meets two or more of the criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest set out in paragraphs 1 to 9 of subsection 1 (2). O. Reg. 569/22, s. 1.

Criteria, s. 41 (1) (b) of the Act

3. (1) The criteria set out in subsection (2) are prescribed for the purposes of clause 41 (1) (b) of the Act. O. Reg. 569/22, s. 1.

(2) Subject to subsection (3), in the case of a by-law passed under subsection 41 (1) of the Act on or after January 1, 2023, a municipality or any defined area or areas of it may be designated by such a by-law as a heritage conservation district under subsection 41 (1) of the Act if the municipality or the defined area or areas of it meets the following criteria:

1. At least 25 per cent of the properties within the municipality or defined area or areas satisfy two or more of the following:
 - i. The properties have design value or physical value because they are rare, unique, representative or early examples of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.
 - ii. The properties have design value or physical value because they display a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.
 - iii. The properties have design value or physical value because they demonstrate a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.
 - iv. The properties have historical value or associative value because they have a direct association with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.

- v. The properties have historical value or associative value because they yield, or have the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.
- vi. The properties have historical value or associative value because they demonstrate or reflect the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.
- vii. The properties have contextual value because they define, maintain or support the character of the district.
- viii. The properties have contextual value because they are physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to each other.
- ix. The properties have contextual value because they are defined by, planned around or are themselves a landmark. O. Reg. 569/22, s. 1.

(3) Subsection (2) does not apply in respect of a by-law passed under subsection 41 (1) of the Act on or after January 1, 2023 if a notice of a public meeting required to be held for the purposes of the by-law under subsection 41.1 (7) of the Act was given before January 1, 2023. O. Reg. 569/22, s. 1.

(4) For clarity, the requirement set out in subsection 41.1 (5.1) of the Act,

- (a) does not apply in respect of a by-law under subsection 41 (1) of the Act that is passed before January 1, 2023; and
- (b) does not apply in respect of a by-law under subsection 41.1 (2) of the Act. O. Reg. 569/22, s. 1.

Document 4 – Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Description of Property

The Bronson Centre, 211 Bronson Avenue is a three-storey, flat-roofed institutional building constructed between 1929 and 1962. It occupies the entire block fronting on Bronson Avenue between Nepean and Lisgar Streets in Ottawa's Centretown neighbourhood.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The Bronson Centre has design value as a representative example of an institutional building, constructed in phases between 1929 and 1962. The original Immaculata High School, constructed in 1929 at the corner of Lisgar Street and Bronson Avenues is a representative example of the Collegiate Gothic style, a popular style for institutional buildings across North America from the early-to-mid-twentieth century. Features typical of the style include the flat roof, stone cladding and quoins, and central entranceway. The Bronson Centre has several additions, most notably the D.A. Kearns Memorial Wing, constructed to the east of the original building in 1950 and the large central addition, constructed along Bronson Avenue in 1962. Both additions are clad in stone and represent a compatible evolution and interpretation of the original Collegiate Gothic style building.

The Bronson Centre has associative value as the representative work of several significant Ottawa architects. The original 1929 school was designed by W.E. Noffke, arguably Ottawa's most significant architect of the 20th century. The 1950 Dr. D.A. Kearns Memorial wing was designed by local architects Hazelgrove and Lithwick and the 1962 wing including the auditorium was designed by local architecture firm Balharrie, Helmer and Morin.

The Bronson Centre has historical value for its direct associations with the Grey Nuns, and Immaculata High School. The Grey Nuns purchased this property in 1928 and constructed a new school on the site in 1929, which was expanded over time and served as the Immaculata High School until 1994. The Grey Nuns are an important religious order in the history of Ottawa, first arriving in 1845 to provide nursing services under the direction of Mother Elisabeth Bruyère. The order has been involved in healthcare and education in Ottawa for almost 200 years. The building is also significant for its association with Immaculata High School which was an important component of the Catholic school system in 20th century Ottawa and continues in its current location on Main Street. Since 1996 the building has housed the Bronson Centre, an important community hub for social services, arts and music in Ottawa.

The Bronson Centre has contextual value as a landmark on Bronson Avenue both for its size, spanning the entire block of Bronson Avenue between Nepean and Lisgar Streets and for its function as both a school and now a community hub. As a Catholic school for almost 70 years, the building is also visually and historically linked to the development of significant institutions in this part of Centretown including St. Vincent's Hospital (1932), Erskine Presbyterian Church (1905), and MacPhail Baptist Church (1893).

Heritage Attributes

Key exterior attributes that contribute to the cultural heritage value of 211 Bronson Avenue include are outlined below.

Those physical attributes of the building that make it a cohesive complex, built in phases between 1929 and 1962 including its:

- Limestone cladding with ashlar details
- Three storey massing with flat roof
- Use of decorative stone details and stepped parapet walls
- Fenestration pattern including bands of windows
- Use of detailing to separate each wing, creating legibility between each phase of the building

1929 School Building (corner of Lisgar Street and Bronson Avenue)

Those attributes of the original Immaculata High School building that embody the Collegiate Gothic style include:

- Three storey massing with flat roof and stepped parapets with decorative stone details
- Split-faced limestone cladding with ashlar details and stepped stone pilasters at the northwest and southwest corners
- Symmetrical front (west) elevation including:
 - Central arched entrance sidelites and transom window
 - Bands of windows to the north and south of the main entrance with stone lintels, sills and quoins
- Projecting arched entranceway with stepped parapet, flanked by stepped pilasters with dripstones on the south facade
- Asymmetrical south façade including the fenestration pattern with stone sills, lintels and quoins
- 1929 datestone at the southwest corner

1950 D.A. Kearns Memorial Wing (Lisgar Street)

- Three storey massing with flat roof
- Limestone cladding with ashlar details

- Projecting arched entranceway with crenellated parapet, corner buttresses and stone details including carved nameplate “Dr. D.A. Kearns Memorial”
- Two storey vertically oriented window with limestone quoins
- Fenestration pattern including bands of windows with stone sills, lintels and quoins
- 1948 datestone at south east corner

1962 Wing (Bronson Avenue)

- Three storey massing with flat roof and stepped parapet
- Limestone cladding with ashlar details
- Central entrance porch with recessed entrance and stepped parapet
- Fenestration pattern with pairs of windows arranged in squares, with stone quoins and continuous stone sills and lintels reflecting the bands of windows on the earlier sections of the building
- 1962 date stone south of the main entrance

Those attributes that express the contextual value of the Bronson Centre, 211 Bronson Avenue as a landmark in Centretown include:

- Its prominent siting, occupying the entire street frontage along Bronson Avenue from Nepean Street to Lisgar Street

The 1952 nurses’ residence wing and all building interiors are excluded from the designation.

Document 5 – Description of Rehabilitation Work

- Repair and rehabilitation the south and west façades including:
 - For the 1962 wing:
 - removal of metal flashing and unsupported coping stones
 - waterproofing
 - reinstatement of the limestone veneer and metal flashing, in-kind
 - For the 1929 wing:
 - Continued dismantling of the south-west corner
 - Application of rust coating on exposed steel
 - Installation of temporary supports for unsupported stones including beneath the roof slab where the portico has been removed
 - Cleaning and protection of the terrazzo floor with rigid insulation and plywood
 - Reinstatement/reconstruction of the dismantled sections and portico using salvaged/documented stones, as far as possible and like-for-like replaces as necessary.
 - Installation of a comprehensive scaffold covering from base to the top of the building and/or installation of insulated tarps to safeguard masonry and allow work to continue over the winter months using appropriate methods to protect the masonry assembly of the building.