

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Description of Property – Britannia Yacht Club, 2777 Cassels Street

2777 Cassels Street, home of the Britannia Yacht Club, is a square shaped two-and-a-half storey cut stone and stucco building with a steeply pitched red roof, located at the western end of Cassels Street in Ottawa's Britannia Village neighbourhood.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The Britannia Yacht Club has design value as a representative example of a late nineteenth century recreational clubhouse with a simple, utilitarian design. Constructed in 1896, the building's square footprint, steeply pitched hip roof, dormers, and a wide wraparound verandah, were characteristic of recreational architecture seen on the waterways in Ottawa and across Ontario around the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The original functional attributes including boat storage, panoramic views of the waterfront, and a space for club activities and social events, were essential to recreational building architecture.

2777 Cassels Street building is directly associated with the growth and popularity of the Britannia Yacht Club, which is one of the oldest recreational clubs in Ottawa that still operates today. As early as the 1860s, Britannia Village residents were interested in water activities on Lac Deschênes. In 1887, the Britannia Yacht Club (previously known as the Britannia Aquatic Club, Britannia Nautical Club, Britannia Boating Club, and Britannia Boat House Club) was founded. They originally met in an old sawmill which they quickly outgrew due to increasing membership, spurring the need for a purpose-built clubhouse, which culminated in the construction of 2777 Cassels Street. From 1896 to today, 2777 Cassels Street has been used by the Britannia Yacht Club, including between 1905 and 1918 for boat storage as the remainder of club activities operated in the clubhouse built at the end of the pier.

The building was designed by Edgar Lewis Horwood, a prominent architect who practiced in Ottawa from 1895 to 1940 and served as Chief Architect for the Department of Public Works from 1915 to 1919. Horwood was considered “at the very top in old Colonial Architecture” and is credited with designing a wide range of buildings across Ottawa including the Bank Street streetscape and other landmarks such as the Carnegie Library. 2777 Cassels Street reflects the work of the well-respected Britannia carpenter Charles Robinson. Robinson can be credited with constructing defining buildings in Britannia attributed to its historic cottage community. He built numerous cottages and developed Britannia’s high style of the vernacular style cottages around the turn of the nineteenth century. In addition to building the Britannia Nautical Club’s clubhouse in 1896, he built St. Stephen’s Anglican Church in 1892, both of which reflect the expanding cottage resort and Robinson’s building projects meeting the community’s needs.

2777 Cassels Street has contextual value as a landmark building that supports the character of Britannia as a historic cottage community and is historically linked to its surroundings. Its prominent waterfront location and access to Lac Deschênes make it highly scenic and accessible for water activities, and its red asphalt roof identifies the highly visible landmark along the Ottawa River. The building reflects late nineteenth to early twentieth century architectural characteristics which define Britannia as a historic summer community. The popularity and growth of the boat club can be attributed to the extension of the Ottawa Electric Company streetcars to Britannia and the opening of Britannia Park in 1900. Between 1900 and 1914, Britannia was at its peak as a summer resort visited by thousands daily. The clubhouse served the boating needs of members, as well as acting as a social community centre serving both local Britannia and Ottawa residents alike. 2777 Cassels Street was an integral part of the historic Britannia summer resort and remains a central community hub today.

Description of Heritage Attributes

Key exterior attributes that contribute to the heritage value of the Britannia Yacht Club as a representative example of purpose-built late nineteenth century recreational building in Ontario include:

- Simple, square-shaped footprint
- Large massing of two and a half storeys, a steeply pitched red hip roof, and hipped dormers
- Wide, wraparound second storey verandah on the west, north, east façades (originally open, currently has open and enclosed sections), providing views of the Ottawa River
- Large windows on each façade
- Picturesque setting:
 - Prominent location on the point of the Britannia peninsula
 - Multiple views of the Ottawa River

Revival styles were popular in the early twentieth century for residential and recreational buildings. 2777 Cassels Street displays elements associated with Tudor Revival and Gothic Revival style:

- Use of natural materials including stucco on exterior walls and half timbering on the south and west façade of the second storey, and stone foundation and pillars
- Tower on southeast corner with crenellated parapet, buttresses, moulded label, lintels, and groups of windows, and the date “1887” engraved on the south parapet

The interior of the building is excluded in this designation. This designation does not include other associated facilities including the tennis courts, marina, parking, and piers.