

Ontario Regulation 9/06 Assessment

198 Rideau Street

May 2024

Prepared by: Heritage Staff



Executive Summary

Constructed circa 1885, the property at 198 Rideau Street is a three-storey vernacular commercial building on the corner of Rideau and Waller Streets. The building at 198 Rideau Street housed several typical main street businesses, including the T.W. Currier & Co. furniture store, which operated out of the building from 1886 to 1918. Today, the 198 Rideau Street continues to reflect Rideau Street's history as a commercial main street in Ottawa.

The property is part of a large grouping of early commercial buildings on Rideau Street, which together have functioned as a commercial corridor on a main street in Lowertown since their construction in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Today, the building continues to support retail and commercial activity on one of Ottawa's historic main streets.

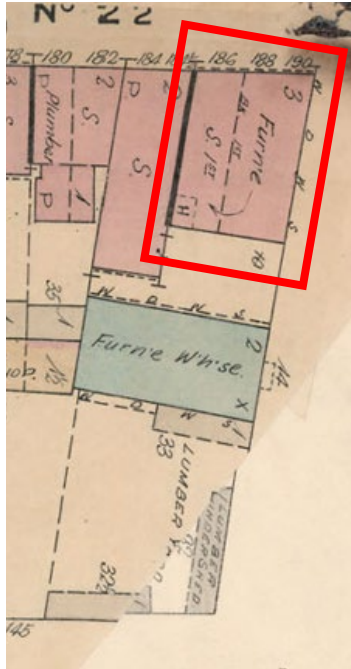
The property has cultural heritage value for its design, associative and contextual values. It meets three of the nine criteria for designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Criterion 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.	Yes
The building at 198 Rideau Street has physical value as a representative example of a late 19th century commercial building on a main street in Ottawa. The building has typical characteristics of a late 19th century commercial building, including its three-storey massing, flat roof, and brick cladding. In particular, the building's arched windows reference commercial Italianate architecture or Romanesque Revival style, as seen in the buildings at 149 and 152 Rideau Street respectively.	

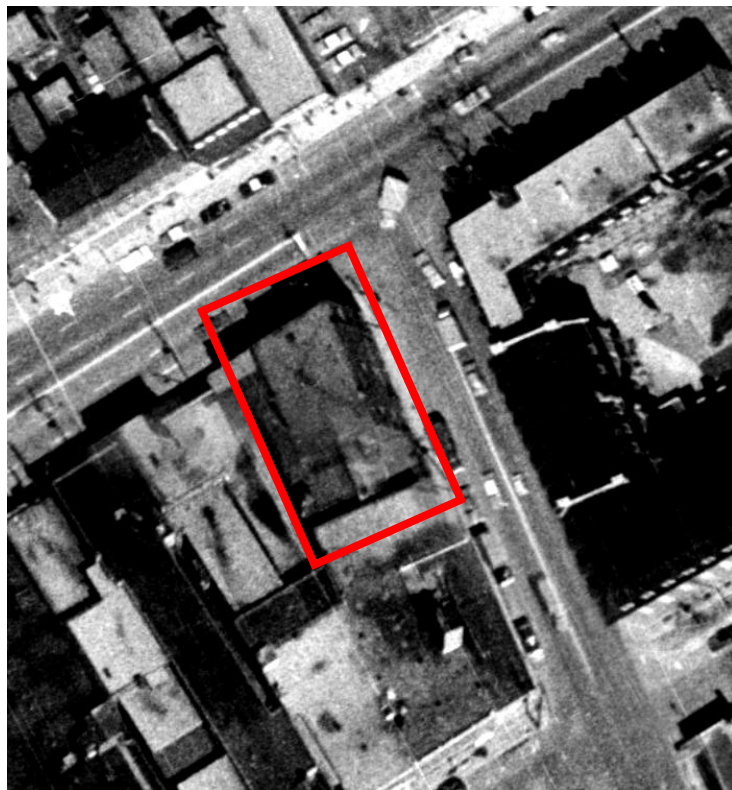
Supporting Details

Description of Building

- The building, located at 198 Rideau Street is a three-storey red brick building in the vernacular style, constructed c. 1885.
- The building at 198 Rideau Street is located on the corner of Rideau and Waller Streets. The building features a chamfered entrance at the intersection of these streets.
- The ground floor of the building features a storefront with large display windows.
- Above the ground floor, the building's top two storeys feature a balanced, slightly asymmetrical, simple façade.
- The building's Rideau Street elevation features brick pilasters starting from the top of the first storey and extending beyond the roofline.
- The second storey on the Rideau Street elevation includes two arched windows topped with continuous brick voussoirs with a central brick keystone. On the larger window, the keystone extends to one of the piers.
- The third storey includes four rectangular windows with rusticated stone lintels and subtle brick voussoirs.
- The building features brick stringcourses below and above the third storey windows, as well as below the roofline.
- The Waller Street façade includes three widely spaced window bays—all windows, except for one rounded-arched window, are rectangular. The ground storey includes two large storefront windows.
- The Waller Street façade includes three brick stringcourses extending from the Rideau Street façade.
- The building housed the T.W. Currier & Co furniture store from 1886 until 1918.



1901 Fire Insurance Plan showing the three-storey brick building at the corner of Rideau and Waller Streets. The T.W. Currier & Co. furniture store used the stone building at 14 Waller Street as their warehouse and ran a small lumberyard at the corner of Besserer and Waller Streets. *Fire Insurance Plan, 1901, Sheet 29.*



1965 aerial view of the intersection of Rideau and Waller Streets, with 198 Rideau Street outlined in red. *GeoOttawa, accessed April 2024.*

Description of Architectural Style

The building at 198 Rideau Street is has design value as a representative example of a nineteenth century commercial building on Rideau Street. The building exhibits typical characteristics of a nineteenth century commercial building in Ottawa, including its red brick cladding, and first storey featuring a store front with large display windows.

Early commercial buildings in Ottawa were often constructed of red brick, as it became an easily accessible material in the area in the late nineteenth century.¹ The building's form at 198 Rideau Street is organized with storefronts on the bottom storey, and residential or office space above, reflecting a common approach for historical commercial and mixed-use buildings in Ottawa.

The building at 198 Rideau Street borrows some stylistic influences from neighbouring buildings. In particular, the building's arched windows referencing commercial Italianate architecture or Romanesque Revival style, as seen in the buildings at 149 and 152 Rideau Street respectively.

National and Local Context

The building at 198 Rideau Street is a vernacular expression of a commercial building with elements of Italianate and Romanesque Revival influence, which were styles that frequently used in early commercial buildings in Canada.

The Italianate style, popular in Canada from the 1830s until the 1920s, used decorative ornamentation to evoke a sense of opulence to promote commerce. Similarly, the Romanesque Revival style, popular throughout the 19th century, was meant to produce a sense of stability and permanency and was also a common choice for commercial buildings on main streets.²

As a purpose-built commercial building, the 198 Rideau Street draws on these influences. Similar examples of vernacular commercial architecture in Ottawa can be found on other historic commercial areas in Ottawa, like Bank Street and in the ByWard Market.

¹ "History of Ottawa's Brickyards, Lecture by Dr. Bruce Elliott," *Heritage Ottawa*, accessed April 2024.

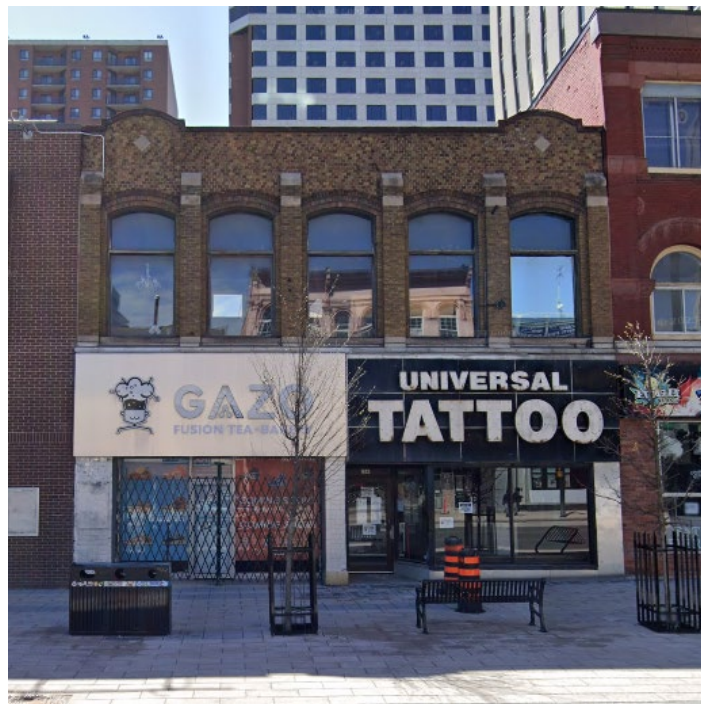
² Shannon Ricketts, Leslie Maitland, and Jacqueline Hucker, "The Romanesque Revival Style," *A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles – Second Edition* (Canada: Broadview Press, 2004), 97.



212 and 243 Bank Street, both protected under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, are examples of a vernacular commercial building with Italianate influences on a historic main street in Ottawa. *Centretown Heritage Inventory Database*, accessed April 2024.



52-54 ByWard Market Square, designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, is a vernacular commercial building in the ByWard Market. *Google Maps*, accessed April 2024.



156-158 Rideau Street, just to the west of 198 Rideau Street, is another example of a vernacular commercial building on Rideau Street. Rather than Italianate or Romanesque Revival, this building has elements of the Art Deco style. *Google Maps*, accessed April 2024.

Criterion 2

The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.	No
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Heritage staff have reviewed the original plans and drawings for the subject building, compared the building to others of similar age or typology, and consulted relevant secondary sources including newspaper articles and architectural history books. Staff's review concluded that the property does not display a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.

Criterion 3

The property has design value or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.	No
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Heritage staff have compared the building to others of similar age or typology, and consulted relevant secondary sources including newspaper articles and architectural history books. Staff's review concluded that this property exemplifies typical construction methods for buildings of its type. The property does not meet this criterion.

Criterion 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.	No
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While this property reflects the general theme of nineteenth century commerce on Rideau Street, it does not have a strong direct association an event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community. The property does not meet this criterion.

Criterion 5

The property has historical or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.	No
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Based on research conducted by Heritage Staff, the property does not yield information that contributes to the understanding of a community or culture. The property does not meet this criterion.

Criterion 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.	No
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Research conducted did not reveal that this property is representative of the work of a known or significant architect, builder, designer or theorist. The property does not meet this criterion.

Criterion 7	
The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.	Yes
198 Rideau Street has contextual value as it is important in supporting and maintaining the character of Rideau Street— which has functioned as a commercial main street in Ottawa since the nineteenth century. Throughout the twentieth century, most of Rideau Street between Sussex Drive and Cumberland Street was occupied by commercial spaces. The building at 198 Rideau Street housed several typical main street businesses, including the T.W. Currier & Co. furniture store, which operated out of the building from 1886 to 1918. Today, the 198 Rideau Street continues to reflect Rideau Street’s history as a commercial main street in Ottawa.	

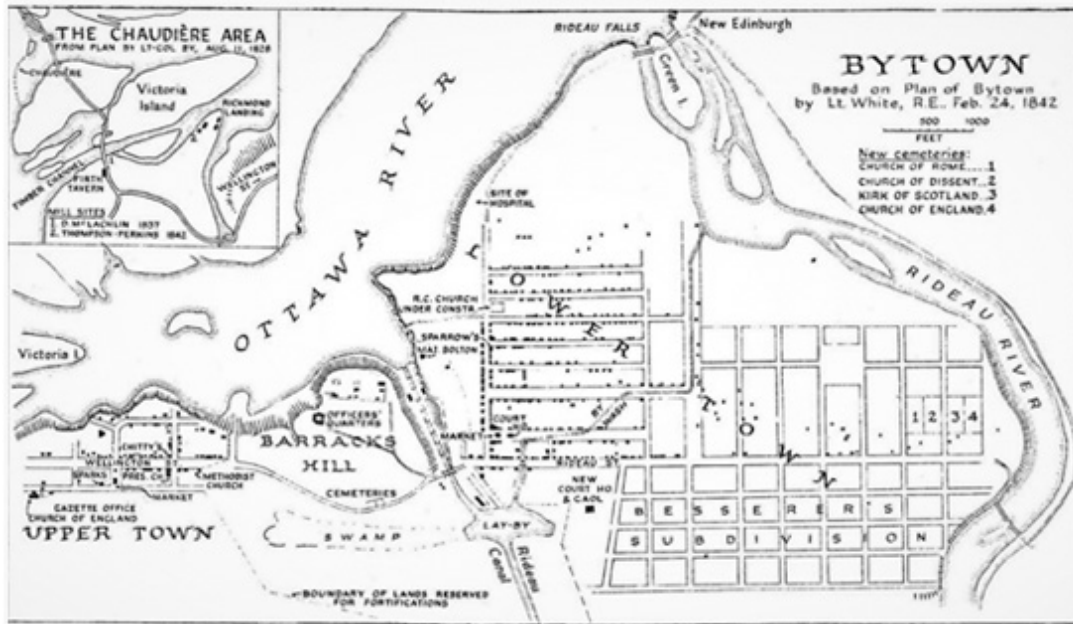
Supporting Details

The building at 198 Rideau Street has functioned as a mixed-use building with commercial space on the first storey since it’s construction in c. 1885. The building is important in maintaining and supporting the character of Rideau Street—which has functioned as a commercial main street in Ottawa’s Lowertown since the 19th century.

History of Lowertown

Rideau Street is located in Lowertown, on the edge of the ByWard Market, in Ottawa’s downtown core. The ByWard Market and Lowertown are two of the earliest settlement areas in the city. Together, they are bounded by the Rideau Canal and Sussex Drive to the west, the Rideau Street commercial corridor to the south, also encompassing the Rideau Centre to Mackenzie King Bridge, and finally the Rideau River, meandering from the Ottawa River, collectively acting as both the eastern and northern boundary of the neighbourhood.

In 1826, lead by Colonel By and Thomas McKay, the entrance of the Rideau Canal was determined, and as such, the birth of Bytown. The street grid in the ByWard and Lowertown areas derives from the distribution of land in 1827 when Colonel John By laid out Bytown. Bytown was originally comprised of and divided into Lower Town and Upper Town. Upper Town was predominately occupied by English Protestants, many who worked as officers for the military, whereas Lower Town became home for many tradesman and canal workers.



Map of Bytown, 1842, showing historic Lower Town and Upper Town. *The Historical Society of Ottawa*, accessed 2023.

A critical aspect of the economic and industrial development of both the ByWard and Lowertown neighbourhoods was the opening of the Rideau Canal in 1832. The Rideau Canal was constructed between 1826 and 1832 as part of a military strategy to establish an alternative route to the St. Lawrence River transportation corridor. Although built with the intent to protect Canada from American invasion, military control was relinquished as the threat subsided and the canal became predominately used for transportation of civilians, commercial goods, and natural resources; thereby increasing trade and spurring economic growth, and subsequently leading to the development of the area.

The construction of the railway through Ottawa's downtown core in 1854, and the expansions of Ottawa after the city was chosen as the national capital in 1857, also contributed to development. The construction of the Parliament Buildings just west of Sussex Drive in the 1860s resulted in an influx of public servants in the area, which gave way to the rise of commerce in the area specifically on Rideau Street and in the ByWard Market. Lowertown was an arrival point for many cultural groups including Irish, French Canadians and Ottawa's earliest Jewish community. Many of these new arrivals worked on the construction of the canal, while the Jewish community became prominent local shopkeepers, running businesses relating to food, clothing, second-hand goods, shoe repair, tailors, etc.

History of Rideau Street as a Commercial Main Street

Originally established as a corduroy road by Colonel John By in 1827, Rideau Street was the main route from Ottawa to Montreal.³ Rideau Street was originally intended to be a residential street due to its large lanes and lots. While Rideau Street east of King Edward Street remained a primarily residential street well into the 20th century, the west end of Rideau Street became a busy commercial street due to its proximity to transportation, services, the ByWard Market, and Parliament Hill.⁴

Further facilitating Lowertown's expansion was the construction of Ottawa's first large hospital, The Carleton Protestant General Hospital (now Wallis House, 589 Rideau Street), at the east end of Rideau Street in 1875.⁵ The 1891 construction of streetcar lines along Dalhousie, Rideau, and George Streets as well as Sussex Drive also greatly contributed to the expansion of residential and commercial development in the area, which was becoming home to an increasing number of public servants and the middle class. The rise of the middle class in Lowertown contributed to the success of large commercial stores on Rideau Street.

Since its construction in c.1885, the building at the building at 198 Rideau Street has housed various local businesses. From 1886 until 1918, the building was occupied by the T.W. Currier Furniture store and warehouse. The furniture store used the building at 14 Waller Street, a property designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, as their warehouse. T.W. Currier Furniture also ran a small lumberyard at the corner of Waller and Besserer Streets. In 1918, the building was briefly a music shop before becoming the Kronick & Cohen furniture store in 1920. The building's continued mixed use expression makes it an essential component of Rideau Street as a commercial main street.

Today, the first storey of the 198 Rideau Street continues to be used as a commercial space. The building at 198 Rideau Street maintains and supports the character of Rideau Street as a historic and current commercial main street.

³ City of Ottawa Planning and Growth Management. "Uptown Rideau Street Community Design Plan," *City of Ottawa*, 2015, page 26.

⁴ City of Ottawa Planning and Growth Management. "Uptown Rideau Street Community Design Plan," *City of Ottawa*, 2015, page 26.

⁵ City of Ottawa Planning and Growth Management. "Uptown Rideau Street Community Design Plan," *City of Ottawa*, 2015, page 26.



Sussex Drive and Rideau Street, 1875.
Credit: Topley Studio Fonds/Library and Archives Canada/PA-012527



Storefronts on Rideau Street, 1878.
Credit: William James Topley/Library and Archives Canada/PA-027441



The intersection of Rideau and Waller Streets in 1938, with 198 Rideau Street visible on the right.

Credit: Canada. Dept. of Public Works / Library and Archives Canada / PA-201613

Criterion 8	
The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.	Yes
The building at 198 Rideau Street is historically, functionally, and visually linked to the surrounding commercial area. This building, together with others, including 149, 152, and 156-158 Rideau Street, have historically functioned as part of a commercial corridor in Lowertown since their construction in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These buildings are visually linked to each other in terms of form, massing, cladding, and type, with common features such as flat roofs, brick facades, and commercial space at grade. Today, this building retains its original purpose, continuing to support retail and commercial activity on one of Ottawa's historic main streets.	

Supporting Details

Today, Rideau Street continues to function as an important main commercial street in downtown Ottawa, with the Rideau Centre sitting at the heart of Lowertown. The Rideau Centre, which has frontage on Rideau Street, is a modern commercial landmark in Ottawa and is integrated into the historic commercial streetscape of Rideau Street. The building at 198 Rideau Street has consistently functioned as a commercial space within a hub of commercial activity in Lowertown. Thus, the property is functionally and historically linked to its surroundings.

From Sussex Drive to Cumberland Street, both the north and south sides of Rideau Street are characterized by the presence of commercial spaces. The building at 198 Rideau Street is part of a large grouping of remaining early commercial buildings on Rideau Street.

Some of the earliest commercial buildings on Rideau Street are situated on the block between Sussex Drive and Dalhousie Street. These properties include the Featherstone Building at 103-105 Rideau Street, constructed in 1869, which originally operated as a drugstore; 101 Rideau Street, constructed in 1871, originally used as a bookstore and later a dry goods store; and The Atwood building at 97-99 Rideau Street, constructed in 1908, originally an apartment building.⁶ All of these properties are designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

⁶ "The Atwood, 101 Rideau Street, and The Featherstone Building," *Heritage Ottawa*.



Facades of 97-99, 101, and 103-105 Rideau Street. *Heritage Ottawa*, accessed 2023.

Throughout the twentieth century, most of the block of Rideau Street between Sussex and Mosgrove Streets was occupied by large commercial spaces. In 1914, McKerracher-Wanless Limited, a large menswear store, opened at 41 Rideau Street in the Plaza Building on the northeast corner of Rideau Street and Sussex Drive. In 1945, the store became Henry “Macks” Limited, also a menswear store, before it moved to 151 Rideau Street in 1967. In 1949, the Woolworth’s Department Store opened at 47 Rideau Street between the Macks in the Plaza Building and Freiman’s at 73 Rideau Street. The Freiman’s department store existed at 73 Rideau Street in some capacity from 1902 to 1974. The building at 73 Rideau Street has been the Hudson’s Bay Company since 1974 and was integrated into the Rideau Centre in the 1980s.



41, 47, and 73 Rideau Street in 1957. Copyright: Andrew Newton Photographers Limited, *City of Ottawa Archives*, MG393-NP-48822-001, Item CA043955.

Other notable department stores on Rideau Street include The Charles Ogilvy Limited Department Store, which opened in 1907 on the south side of Rideau Street at the corner of Rideau and Nicholas Streets. Its façade is incorporated into the Rideau Centre today.⁷ In 1922, the J.A. Larocque Department Store opened at 169 Rideau, which is now called Mercury Court and shares a block with 198 Rideau Street.⁸

⁷ "Charles Ogilvy Limited Department Store," *Heritage Ottawa*, accessed January 2024.

⁸ Robert Vineberg, "Remembering "The Store": a brief history of Larocque's Department Store," *Lowertown Echo de la Basse-ville*, November 5, 2020. Accessed December 2023.



Rideau Street and Nicholas Street, looking west and showing streetcars and Ogilvy's department store.

Credit: Topley Studio Fonds/Library and Archives Canada/PA-012905.

The building at 198 Rideau Street is situated on the southwest corner of the intersection of Rideau and Waller Streets. The building is surrounded by historical commercial buildings. One block west of 198 Rideau Street, 152 and 156-158 Rideau Street have operated as a commercial and mixed-use space since their construction in c.1898 and c.1918, respectively. The north side of Rideau Street includes 149 Rideau Street, which has operated as a mixed-use building since its construction in 1875, and 155 Rideau Street, known as the Clegg-Feller Building, which is one of the oldest examples of commercial architecture in Ottawa and is designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.⁹ These buildings are visually linked to each other in terms of form, massing, cladding, and type, with common features such as flat roofs, brick facades, and commercial space at grade. Today, this building retains its original purpose, continuing to support retail and commercial activity on one of Ottawa's historic main streets.

⁹ "Clegg-Feller Building | Windsor Smoke Shop," *Heritage Ottawa*, accessed March 2024.



198 Rideau Street show the Rideau Street façade. *City of Ottawa, 2024.*



198 Rideau Street from the intersection of Rideau and Waller Streets. *City of Ottawa*, 2024.

Criterion 9

The property has contextual value because it is a landmark

No

The property is not considered a landmark on Rideau Street, nor is it commonly referenced for the purposes of wayfinding.

Sources

“The Atwood, 101 Rideau Street, and The Featherstone Building,” Heritage Ottawa, accessed December 2023.

Aubin, Marc and Nancy Chenier. “Lowertown East: Our Disappearing Heritage,” 2011.

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“Clegg-Feller Building | Windsor Smoke Shop,” *Heritage Ottawa*, accessed March 2024.

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The Ottawa City Directory, 1861-1990.

Powell, James. “Remember this? Freiman’s becomes the Bay,” *CityNews*, 2021.

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