

Document 11 - Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Description of Property – 217 Rideau Street

217 Rideau Street is a mixed-use, three-storey stone clad building located on the north side of Rideau Street, between Dalhousie Street and Cumberland Street.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The building at 217 Rideau Street has design value as a unique example of the Beaux-Arts architectural style used for a commercial building. The original building was constructed circa 1876 and underwent façade alterations in the early to mid-twentieth century to reflect the Beaux-Arts architectural style. Popular in Canada during the first two decades of the twentieth century, the Beaux-Arts style was often used for civic buildings like libraries, train stations, theatres, banks, and schools. The architectural features of the building which are characteristic of the Beaux-Arts style include its classical detailing, such as its shallow pilasters with decorative capitals, ornate spandrel panels, and a roofline featuring a parapet and balustrades. The property at 217 Rideau Street has design value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship for a commercial building on Rideau Street. This is demonstrated through the building's elaborate use of stone and metal detailing in a commercial building. There are few examples of a commercial building with this level of craftsmanship on Rideau Street, making it unique on its streetscape.

The property at 217 Rideau Street has historical value as it is directly associated with the George E. Preston and Sons tailor shop. The George E. Preston and Sons tailor shop was a well-known men's tailor and suit retailer in Ottawa, established in 1870. The shop operated out of the building at 217 Rideau from 1884 until 1959. Throughout the business' long history, it was frequently patronized by prime ministers and other notable politicians. The store's location on an early commercial main street with proximity to the Parliamentary Precinct contributed to its success as a prestigious and well-established tailoring firm in downtown Ottawa.

217 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 tenants. Today, the building at 217 Rideau Street continues to reflect Rideau Street's history as a commercial main street in Ottawa.

The building at 217 Rideau Street is historically, functionally, and visually linked to the surrounding commercial area. This building, together with others nearby, such as 198 Rideau Street, have historically functioned as part of a commercial corridor on a main street 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, the building continues to support retail and commercial activity on one of Ottawa's historic main streets.

Description of Heritage Attributes

Key exterior attributes that contribute to the cultural heritage value of 217 Rideau Street as a unique example of a commercial building in the Beaux-Art style include:

- Three-storey massing
- Smooth stone-cladding on the south façade
- Flat roof
- Presence of a ground level storefront with display windows
- Symmetrical second and third storeys with:
 - Three sets of rectangular windows separated by pilasters topped with decorative capitals
 - Decorative metal spandrel panels between second and third storey windows
- Heavy dentilled cornice
- Parapet with an unadorned central stone and flanking balustrades

Key attributes that demonstrate 217 Rideau Street's contextual value are:

- The property's location on Rideau Street

The designation excludes the interior of the building.