

Ontario Regulation 9/06 Assessment

123 Metcalfe Street

July 2024

Prepared by: Heritage Staff



Executive Summary

The former YMCA at 123 Metcalfe Street is a five-storey, red-brick building at the intersection of Metcalfe Street and Laurier Avenue. The building was constructed as the Ottawa Young Men Christian's Association in 1909 and features a distinct architectural similarity to other North American YMCA buildings of the era. Since its establishment in the 19th century, the YMCA has been an important community organization in Ottawa known for its social, educational, and athletic programming. The building functioned as Ottawa's downtown YMCA until the late 1960s when it was re-purposed as a hotel. The property has potential to yield information about early queer communities and spaces in Ottawa.

From its construction until the late 1970s, the building shared an intersection and streetscape with other significant civic buildings in Ottawa including the former Carnegie Library, YWCA, and the Ottawa Masonic Temple. The building was likely constructed in its location due to its proximity to other significant civic buildings in Ottawa's downtown core. The building's change in use from a YMCA to hotel reflects the area's gradual change in function from a civic and residential area to a commercial and business district.

The property has cultural heritage value for its design, associative and contextual values. It meets six 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
Response to Criterion	
The property located at 123 Metcalfe Street has design value because it is a representative example of a purpose- built early 20 th century YMCA building, featuring elements of the Italianate, Edwardian, and Renaissance Revival architectural styles. Constructed in 1909 for the Ottawa Young Men’s Christian Association, the building is distinctly identifiable as a YMCA and bears similarity with other YMCA buildings of the era, particularly those in Canada and the north-east United States.	

Supporting Details

Description of Building



The building at 123 Metcalfe is located on the northeast corner of the intersection of Metcalfe Street and Laurier Avenue. *GeoOttawa, 2022.*

The building located at 123 Metcalfe Street is a five-storey, rectangular plan building constructed in 1909. Originally constructed as a YMCA, the building currently houses the Metcalfe Hotel. The building is clad predominantly in Flemish bond red brick and features stone and terra cotta accents throughout. Two bays, each three windows wide, project slightly on the building’s principal façade facing Metcalfe Street. The ground floor is capped by a heavy stone cornice that extends across the Metcalfe Street and Laurier Avenue façades. The second storey features evenly distributed rectangular windows,

each set within round headed arches with cast stone sills and keystones, brick voussoirs, and cast stone tympanum panels decorated with a garland half-relief. The second and third storey feature evenly distributed rectangular windows with brick surrounds, keystones, and cast stone sills. A secondary cornice separates the fourth and fifth storeys, and the fifth storey features decorative brick and cast stone panels separating the regularly spaced rectangular windows. The fifth floor is topped by a terra cotta frieze, cornice with metal flashing, and a stepped brick parapet. These architectural features continue along the Laurier Avenue side, which also features a smaller central entrance.

123 Metcalfe Street has been altered several times since its construction, particularly following its conversion to a hotel in the 1980s. In general, these alterations have retained the core form and key architectural features of the original building, but some original elements have been lost. The ground level and Metcalfe Street entrance have been altered multiple times, most recently circa 2000, when eight engaged limestone columns were covered or removed and replaced with plaster posts. Similar alterations were made to the Laurier Avenue entrance. The foundation level, likely originally limestone, has been altered and now features buff colour plaster cladding. None of the building's windows appear to be original.



123 Metcalfe Street, Metcalfe Street elevation. *City of Ottawa*, 2024.



123 Metcalfe Street, Laurier Avenue elevation. *City of Ottawa*, 2024.

Context and Architectural Style

The building is a representative example of an early 20th century purpose-built YMCA, characteristic of the association's buildings constructed throughout North America during this era. In the late 19th and early 20th century the YMCA embarked on a program of expansion across North America, corresponding with a shift towards increasingly secular and leisure focused programming. This change was intended to compete for the time and attention of young men against the growing influence of North American mass consumer culture – exemplified by the growth of cinemas, mass advertising, and high circulation newspapers and magazines – which was considered at odds with the YMCA's core Protestant influenced values.¹ At the same time, the YMCA aligned itself with the City Beautiful movement, a philosophical movement in architecture and urban planning premised on the idea that beautification encouraged harmonious social order and improved quality of life.²

The YMCA began to position its buildings as key civic infrastructure – akin to libraries, churches, and schools – with architecture reflecting this desired stature by establishing an increasingly recognizable and standardized form across North America. Accordingly,

¹ Paula Lupkin, *Manhood Factories: YMCA Architecture and the Making of Modern Urban Culture* (University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 111-112

² Paula Lupkin, *Manhood Factories: YMCA Architecture and the Making of Modern Urban Culture* (University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 96-100

the built form and interior design of newly constructed YMCAs shifted from smaller mixed-use buildings with offices and some sports and education facilities to a larger model focused predominantly on sport and leisure, with dormitories replacing offices and retail spaces as the organization's primary revenue driver.³ Architecturally, these YMCAs borrowed elements from the classically inspired styles favoured by the City Beautiful movement, notably Beaux-Arts in the United States but also Italianate, Edwardian, and Renaissance Revival.⁴ These exterior motifs can be identified at 123 Metcalfe Street, including the round headed windows with keystones, half-relief decorated tympanum panels, prominent cornices, and regular window arrangement.



Round headed windows with keystones, tympanum panels, and cast stone sills, *City of Ottawa*, 2024.

³ Paula Lupkin, *Manhood Factories: YMCA Architecture and the Making of Modern Urban Culture* (University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

⁴ Paula Lupkin, *Manhood Factories: YMCA Architecture and the Making of Modern Urban Culture* (University of Minnesota Press, 2010).



Corner condition showing secondary cornice, main cornice and frieze, and decorative panels on fifth storey (City of Ottawa Photo)

123 Metcalfe Street can be identified as a representative example of an early 20th century YMCA through comparisons to other YMCA buildings of the era. The building predates the full-scale standardization of YMCA design after the 1915 establishment of the organization's Building Bureau; however, it is clearly aligned with the City Beautiful inspired typology which came to define early 20th Century YMCAs in North America. 123 Metcalfe Street is specifically identified in the August 1911 issue of *Brickbuilder*, an American architectural trade publication, as an example of a YMCA building designed to the organization's contemporary standards and is the only Canadian location featured.⁵ Other YMCA locations identified in this article share similar forms and architectural styling to 123 Metcalfe Street, particularly those located in the American Northeast.

⁵ "The Brickbuilder: An Architectural Monthly," (Rogers and Manson: Boston), August 1911, Pages 159-173. Accessed July 2024. <https://archive.org/details/brickbuilder1911roge/brickbuilder1911roge>



YMCA, Camden NJ, Architects Howes & Morse and JC Jefferis (Reproduced from *Brickbuilder*, August 2011).



YMCA, Pittsfield MA, Architects Harding and Seaver (Reproduced from *Brickbuilder*, August 2011).



YMCA Bedford Branch, Brooklyn NY, Architects Jackson and Rosencrans

([Cliff Smith YMCA Postcard Collection at Springfield College](#), Used under Creative Commons License [CC-BY-NC-SA](#))

This common design approach reflects the YMCA's building practices prior to the First World War, where specific architects with specialized experience in YMCA design were repeatedly retained by the organization to reduce costs, produce plans quickly, and ensure its best-practices were consistently applied across the continent.⁶ The subject property's architects – New York firm Jackson and Rosencrans – designed five YMCAs in Canada from 1907 – 1912, all in association with a local architect. 123 Metcalfe Street was the pair's first YMCA in Canada and was designed in association with J. Albert Ewart, followed by locations in Halifax, Montreal, and Winnipeg.⁷ Other firms, such as Chicago's Shattuck and Hussey, similarly designed multiple YMCAs in this shared aesthetic.⁸

⁶ Paula Lupkin, *Manhood Factories: YMCA Architecture and the Making of Modern Urban Culture* (University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 146-147.

⁷ "Jackson & Rosencrans," *Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada 1800-1950*, accessed July 2024.

⁸ Paula Lupkin, *Manhood Factories: YMCA Architecture and the Making of Modern Urban Culture* (University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 146-148.



YMCA, Downtown Winnipeg, Architects Jackson and Rosencrans, 1911 (Photo: George Penner, [Manitoba Historical Society Archives](#))



YMCA, Drummond Street, Montreal, Architects Jackson and Rosencrans, 1912 ([Cliff Smith YMCA Postcard Collection at Springfield College](#), Used under Creative Commons License [CC-BY-NC-SA](#))



Former YMCA, Halifax, Architects Jackson and Rosencrans, 1911 (Photo: [Canada's Historic Places](#))

Criterion 2

The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.

Yes

Response to Criterion

Typical of the early YMCA buildings designed by Jackson and Rosencrans, the building at 123 Metcalfe Street has design value as it displays a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit through its material detailing and architectural ornamentation. The subject building's craftsmanship is demonstrated through the decorative stone carvings in its tympanum panels above the second storey windows, and through its use of mixed materials for the fifth storey's terra cotta frieze. This level of craftsmanship is indicative of a high standard of design and skillful manual labour.

Supporting Details

The building at 123 Metcalfe Street has design value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit. Early YMCAs buildings designed by Jackson and Rosencrans were early precedents of architecture for mixed-use buildings. Their designs typically incorporated a high standard of design through their use of materials and classical detailing.⁹

The subject building's second storey features tympanum panels with a carved stone garland half-relief. This decorative feature would have required significantly skilled manual labour to create. The building's fifth floor uses a mix of materials to create a decorative terra cotta and brick frieze, as well as a stone cornice with metal flashing. The level of craftsmanship and artistry on the subject property is due to a high standard of architectural design, and skilled manual labour.



Tympanum panels with a carved stone garland half-relief on the 123 Metcalfe Street's second storey. *City of Ottawa*, 2024.

⁹ "Jackson & Rosencrans," *Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada 1800-1950*, accessed July 2024.



Decorative terra cotta and brick frieze with a stone and metal cornice on 123 Metcalfe Street's fifth storey and roofline. *City of Ottawa*, 2024.

Criterion 3

The property has design value or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.

No

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.	Yes
Response to Criterion The building at 123 Metcalfe Street has historical value because of its direct association with the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA). Constructed in 1909, the building at 123 Metcalfe Street is a purpose-built YMCA. Ottawa’s YMCA was established in 1867 by local hardware merchant, George Hay. Originally established as a Christian men’s movement, the earliest meetings of the YMCA were prayer groups and bible studies. By the late 20 th century, the YMCA became known for its social, educational, and athletic programming. Since its establishment in the 19 th century, the YMCA has been an important community organization in Ottawa.	

Supporting Details

The building at 123 Metcalfe Street has historical value because of its direct associations with Ottawa’s Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA). Constructed in 1909, the building at 123 Metcalfe Street is purpose-built YMCA building. The YMCA has been a significant institution in Ottawa from its beginnings in 1867. Throughout its history, Ottawa’s YMCA has provided community members with educational, fitness, and community programming.

The YMCA was established in London, England in 1844 by George Williams.¹⁰ At the height of the industrial revolution and urbanization, Williams was concerned for the moral and spiritual life of young men working in major cities.¹¹ Established as a Christian men’s movement associated with the evangelical Protestant church, the YMCA’s original aim was to encourage men to live moral lives, practice religion, and stay away from “the temptations of the world.”¹² The earliest meetings of the YMCA were prayer groups and bible studies, but eventually the organization came to focus on the socialization, education, and physical health of men.¹³

In Britian, YMCAs quickly expanded throughout England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland.¹⁴ North American tourists in Britian were inspired by the success of the movement and the first North American YMCAs opened in Montreal and Boston in

¹⁰ Sherwood Eddy, *A Century with Youth: A History of the Y.M.C.A. from 1844 to 1944* (New York: Association Press, 1944), 1.

¹¹ John Donald Gustav-Wrathall, *Take the Young Stranger by the Hand: Same-Sex Relations and the YMCA*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 10.

¹² “Ottawa’s Y.M.C.A. – Successful Anniversary Services in the Dominion Church – Address from Hon. S. H. Blake—History of the Local Association,” *The Ottawa Journal*, February 9, 1887.

¹³ John Donald Gustav-Wrathall, *Take the Young Stranger by the Hand: Same-Sex Relations and the YMCA*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 10.

¹⁴ John Donald Gustav-Wrathall, *Take the Young Stranger by the Hand: Same-Sex Relations and the YMCA*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 10.

1851.¹⁵ Due to the evangelical nature of early YMCAs, the organization rapidly expanded throughout North American cities during the 1850s and 1860s.¹⁶

Throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the organization continued to expand and develop its policies, mandate, and programming. During this time, and still with the goal of keeping men away from the temptations of a modern age, the YMCA began to incorporate more secular and leisure-based programming.¹⁷ In Canada, early members of the YMCA established the YMCA War Services and helped support the growth the Canadian Pacific Railway by establishing YMCAs along railway lines to provide railway workers with accommodations. By the early 20th century, Canadian YMCAs had introduced swimming lessons, basketball, and volleyball.¹⁸ In 1912, Canadian YMCAs separated from their American counterpart and formed their own National Council of YMCAs.¹⁹

Ottawa's YMCA was established in 1867. Led by George Hay, a local hardware merchant, the inaugural meeting of Ottawa's YMCA was held at the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Centretown on December 20, 1867.²⁰ The organization began with hosting one meeting at week in a room rented on Albert Street.²¹ Early YMCA meetings were held every Tuesday evening and featured lectures for young men in Ottawa.²² In 1870s, the Ottawa YMCA expanded their projects and introduced night school for newsboys, Sunday Schools, and Sunday services in local jails.²³

By the 1880s, YMCA membership and programming had significantly expanded and the need for a dedicated space for the organization became apparent. Following the lead of other YMCAs in major cities, the Ottawa YMCA opened their first building in 1888 at the corner of Queen and O'Connor Streets. The building was constructed to provide men with a place for education, spiritual practice, and recreational activities.²⁴ The original building included a library, meeting rooms, a gymnasium, and apartments.²⁵

¹⁵ "YMCA History," *YMCA Canada*, accessed June 2024.

¹⁶ John Donald Gustav-Wrathall, *Take the Young Stranger by the Hand: Same-Sex Relations and the YMCA*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 14.

¹⁷ John Donald Gustav-Wrathall, *Take the Young Stranger by the Hand: Same-Sex Relations and the YMCA*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 9.

¹⁸ "YMCA History," *YMCA Canada*, accessed June 2024.

¹⁹ "History of the YMCA in Canada," *Kautz Family YMCA Archives*, University of Minnesota, accessed July 2024.

²⁰ "Ottawa Y.M.C.A. Celebrates 75th Anniversary Feb 16," *The Ottawa Journal*, February 13, 1943.

²¹ "Ottawa Y.M.C.A. Celebrates 75th Anniversary Feb 16," *The Ottawa Journal*, February 13, 1943.

²² E.J. Jenkins, "The history of the Ottawa Young Men's Christian Association, 1867-1942," (Ottawa: YMCA, 1943), 5.

²³ E.J. Jenkins, "The history of the Ottawa Young Men's Christian Association, 1867-1942," (Ottawa: YMCA, 1943), 6.

²⁴ "YMCA History," *YMCA Canada*, accessed June 2024.

²⁵ E.J. Jenkins, "The history of the Ottawa Young Men's Christian Association, 1867-1942," (Ottawa: YMCA, 1943), 12.



First YMCA building at the corner of O'Connor and Queen Streets, 1890. Topley Studio / Library and Archives Canada / PA-027201

With the establishment of Ottawa as Canada's capital, and the booming lumber industry, Ottawa's YMCA grew rapidly into the 20th century.²⁶ By 1907, the Ottawa's YMCA had expanded to include nearly one thousand members, and the organization saw demand for a new building.²⁷ Made possible by government funding and community donations, the building at 123 Metcalfe Street opened in 1909. The YMCA's new building included a larger library, gymnasium, pool, billiards room, lecture rooms, bowling alleys, and more living accommodations for newcomers to Ottawa.²⁸ The building at 123 Metcalfe Street, located on the northeast corner of the intersection of Metcalfe Street and Laurier Avenue, sat across the street from the YWCA building, which was constructed on the southeast corner of Metcalfe Street and Laurier Avenue in 1894.²⁹

²⁶ "Ottawa Y.M.C.A. Celebrates 75th Anniversary Feb 16," *The Ottawa Journal*, February 13, 1943.

²⁷ E.J. Jenkins, "The history of the Ottawa Young Men's Christian Association, 1867-1942," (Ottawa: YMCA, 1943), 12.

²⁸ E.J. Jenkins, "The history of the Ottawa Young Men's Christian Association, 1867-1942," (Ottawa: YMCA, 1943), 12.

²⁹ "Forgotten Ottawa: the YWCA," *Urbsite.com*, accessed July 2024.



YMCA at 123 Metcalfe Street, n.d., William James Topley/Library and Archives Canada/PA-009187

Throughout the 20th century, Ottawa's YMCA maintained its Christian underpinnings through regular Bible classes and religious meetings. However, the YMCA began offering more secular programming, and the characteristic YMCA as it is known today began to take shape. Within the city, the organization became known for its social, educational, and athletic programs.³⁰

The building at 123 Metcalfe Street functioned as a YMCA until the mid-1960s. In 1960, the Ottawa's YMCA and YWCA amalgamated to form the YW-YMCA, and decided to construct a new, larger building to house both organizations.³¹ The YW-YMCA building opened at 180 Argyle Street on February 21, 1970. The new building included an Olympic sized swimming pool, classrooms, and a fourteen-storey tower for residential use. Notably, the new building did not include a chapel or any dedicated religious space.³² The building was designed by notable Ottawa architect, George Bemis.³³ This building continues to function as a YW-YMCA today.

³⁰ "There's a New Look at the Old 'Y,'" *The Ottawa Journal*, February 21, 1970.

³¹ "Ottawa Ys Amalgamating," *The Ottawa Journal*, November 25, 1960.

³² "There's a New Look at the Old 'Y,'" *The Ottawa Journal*, February 21, 1970.

³³ "George Edward Bemis," *Ottawa Citizen*, June 3, 2023.



Taggart Family YMCA on Argyle Street, *Google Maps* 2019.

In mid-1960s, the building at 123 Metcalfe Street opened as a hotel and continues to function as a hotel in Ottawa's downtown core today.³⁴

³⁴ James Powell, "The YMCA-YWCA," *Today in Ottawa's History*, December 9, 2023. Accessed July 2024.

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.	Yes
Response to Criterion The building at 123 Metcalfe Street has historical value because it has the potential to yield information about early queer communities and spaces in Ottawa. While historic documentation of gay relations at YMCAs is nearly non-existent, scholars, historians and local experts have begun to speculate about the nature of some of the same-sex relationships at YMCAs across North America. In Ottawa, local experts have made assumptions about gay connections and experiences at the YMCA based on its historic association with virility and the lack of alternative safe spaces for gay and bisexual men to connect with one another. Further research could reveal more information about the nuances of same-sex relations at the YMCA, and about Ottawa's early queer community more generally.	

Supporting Details

The building at 123 Metcalfe Street has historical value because it has the potential to yield information about early queer communities in Ottawa. YMCA buildings across North America provided men with a dedicated space to explore one's identity through education, exercise, and living among other men.³⁵ As such, YMCAs created spaces for same-sex relationships to flourish.³⁶ In recent years, scholars and historians have begun to speculate about the nature of same-sex relations within YMCAs. While historic documentation of gay relations at YMCAs is nearly non-existent, speculation has been drawn from local experts and stories.

YMCAs, and other early fraternal organizations, were "intended as a homosocial world in which an upright, principled masculinity would be cultivated through contact with other men, rather than women."³⁷ However, like other historic spaces that excluded women prior to the sexual revolution, YMCAs are associated with being a male space where gay men could make connections with one another. Historian John Donald Gustav-Wrathall does not categorize these relationships as exclusively sexual or platonic. Without applying contemporary categories, Gustav-Wrathall argues that intimate same-sex relationships are the foundation of fraternal organizations like the YMCA.³⁸

Scholars Caryn E. Neumann and George Chauncey explored the gay histories at YMCAs in Portland, Oregon, and New York respectively. Both examine gay subcultures

³⁵ Paula Lupkin, *Manhood Factories: YMCA Architecture and the Making of Modern Urban Culture* (University of Minnesota Press, 2010), xvi.

³⁶ Paula Lupkin, *Manhood Factories: YMCA Architecture and the Making of Modern Urban Culture* (University of Minnesota Press, 2010), xvii.

³⁷ Paula Lupkin, *Manhood Factories: YMCA Architecture and the Making of Modern Urban Culture* (University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 146-147, xvii.

³⁸ John Donald Gustav-Wrathall, *Take the Young Stranger by The Hand: Same-Sex Relations and the YMCA*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1998.

and scandals at YMCAs in the 1910s and 1920s.³⁹ Neumann also argues that from the 1940s to the 1960s, the YMCA became strongly associated with virility. Local experts assume that there would be the same connections and similar experiences in Ottawa's YMCA.⁴⁰ For example, it is known that prior to amalgamation with the YWCA, men swam nude at Ottawa's YMCA swimming pool.⁴¹ Further research could reveal more information about the intricacies and nuances of same-sex relations at the YMCA, and about Ottawa's early queer community more generally.

³⁹ George Chauncey, "Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion? Homosexual Identities and the Construction of Sexual Boundaries in the World War One Era," *Journal of Social History*, Volume 19, Issue 2, Winter 1985, 189–211.

Caryn E. Neumann, "YMCA," glbtq project, accessed July 2024.

http://www.glbtqarchive.com/ssh/ymca_S.pdf.

⁴⁰ "YMCA: 123 Metcalfe," *The Village Legacy Project | Le Projet de legs du village*, accessed July 2024, <https://www.villagelegacy.ca/items/show/15>.

⁴¹ "YMCA: 123 Metcalfe," *The Village Legacy Project | Le Projet de legs du village*, accessed July 2024, <https://www.villagelegacy.ca/items/show/15>.

"There's a New Look at the Old 'Y'," *The Ottawa Journal*, February 21, 1970.

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.	Yes
<p>Response to Criterion</p> <p>The former YMCA was designed by New York architectural firm Jackson & Rosencrans, notable for their YMCA designs in Canada and the United States, in association with significant Ottawa architect John Albert Ewart. Jackson and Rosencrans' work in Canada and the United States was influential in establishing a standardized, global design for YMCAs in the early 20th century. 123 Metcalfe Street is representative of their work and therefore satisfies Criterion 6 as demonstrating the work of an architect significant to the Canadian architectural community. Ewart was a prominent architect in Ottawa for over 50 years; however, the extent of his contribution to the former YMCA is not known. Given the building's clear connection to Jackson and Rosencrans' body of work, 123 Metcalfe Street is not considered representative of Ewart's work.</p>	

Supporting Details

123 Metcalfe Street was designed by New York City based architectural firm Jackson and Rosencrans, lead by architects John F. Jackson – a Canadian born in Saint John, New Brunswick – and American architect E.J Rosencrans.⁴² Jackson, as partner and later an independent architect, designed over 70 YMCA buildings in North America, including five in Canada (Ottawa, Montreal, Halifax, and Winnipeg) and others throughout the eastern United States, including locations in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Harlem.⁴³ The firm's work served as early precedents for the YMCA's mixed use building model and generally featured high quality, classically inspired detailing throughout.⁴⁴ Jackson and Rosencrans are a significant architectural firm in early 20th century Canadian architecture, whose work was influential in establishing a standardized global design for YMCAs in the early 20th century. 123 Metcalfe Street is representative of their work and therefore satisfies this criterion.

The subject property was designed in association with prominent Ottawa architect John Albert Ewart. At this time, it was common for YMCA buildings to be designed by specialist architects – independent architects treated essentially as pseudo-employees of the YMCA – with the assistance of a local architect knowledgeable in local building practices, materials, and requirements.⁴⁵ It is likely that Ewart filled the role of local

⁴² "Jackson & Rosencrans," *Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada 1800-1950*, accessed July 2024.

⁴³ "Jackson & Rosencrans," *Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada 1800-1950*, accessed July 2024.

⁴⁴ "Jackson & Rosencrans," *Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada 1800-1950*, accessed July 2024.

⁴⁵ Paula Lupkin, *Manhood Factories: YMCA Architecture and the Making of Modern Urban Culture* (University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

architect for this project, rather than that of principal designer. While no sources exist to confirm this relationship, it is notable that architectural drawings of the YMCA are not included in Ewart's extensive personal fond at Library and Archives Canada. Given the likelihood of Ewart's secondary role in the design of 123 Metcalfe Street and the significant number of buildings in Ottawa attributed to his design, the subject property can not be characterized as representative of Ewart's body of work.

Criterion 7

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

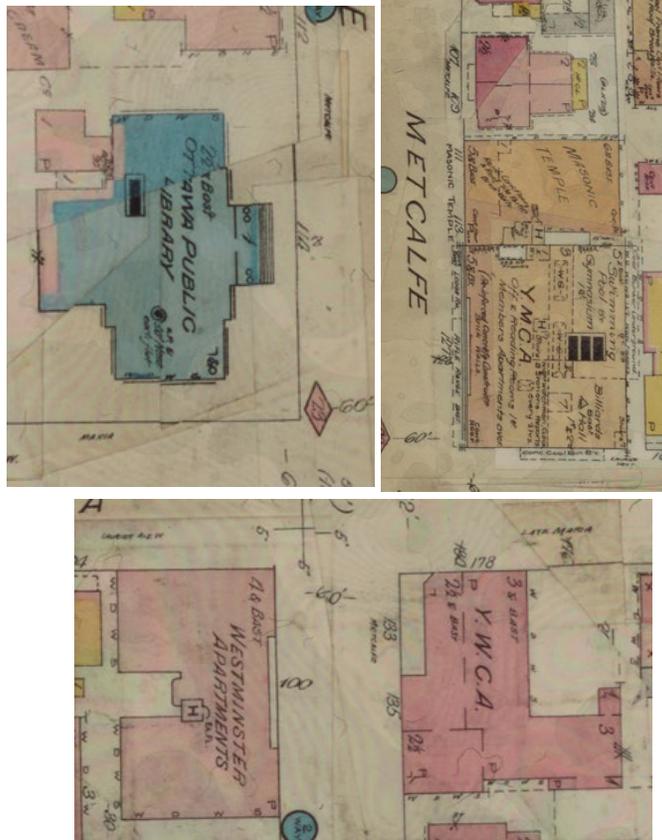
No**Response to Criterion**

The property does not meet this criterion. The building at 123 Metcalfe Street is located in the area historically referred to as Uppertown, today forming the northernmost portion of Centretown. This area, which includes the subject property, features a mix of office, institutional, commercial, and residential buildings from various eras. This mixed character is exemplary of the area's long-term transition from its earliest role as an industrial centre to its contemporary function as part of Ottawa's central business district.

Criterion 8	
The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.	Yes
Response to Criterion	
<p>The building at 123 Metcalfe Street has contextual value because it is historically and functionally linked to its surroundings. From its construction until the late 1970s, the building shared an intersection and streetscape with other significant historic civic buildings in Ottawa including the Carnegie Library, YWCA, and the Ottawa Masonic Temple. The building was likely constructed in this location due to its proximity to other significant civic buildings in Ottawa's downtown core. The building's frontage on Metcalfe Street, a historic street connecting Parliament Hill to the landmark Victoria Memorial Museum, reflects the organization's local and national significance. As well, the building's change in use from a YMCA to hotel reflects the area's gradual change in function from a civic and residential area to a commercial and business district.</p>	

Supporting Details

The building at 123 Metcalfe Street has contextual value because it is historically and functionally linked to its surroundings. At the time of construction, the building at 123 Metcalfe Street shared an intersection and streetscape with other significant civic buildings in central Ottawa, including the Carnegie Library, YWCA, and the Ottawa Masonic Temple.



Sheet 34, 36, and 37 of the 1922 Fire Insurance Plan showing the four corners of the intersection of Metcalfe Street and Laurier Avenue.

The building at 123 Metcalfe Street is located on the northeast corner of the intersection of Metcalfe Streets and Laurier Avenue. Across the street from the subject building was the YWCA, which was constructed on the southeast corner of Metcalfe Street and Laurier Avenue in 1894. The YWCA was demolished in the 1960s.



YWCA at Metcalfe Street and Laurier Avenue, 1905. Topley Studio Fonds / Library and Archives Canada / PA-033949

The Carnegie Library, constructed in 1906, was on the northwest corner of the intersection. The Carnegie Library was demolished in the late 1960s, and the existing Brutalist library, designed by George Bemi, was constructed in 1973.



Ottawa's Carnegie Library, n.d. Canada. Dept. of Mines and Technical Surveys / Library and Archives
Canada / PA-023297

Directly adjacent to the 123 Metcalfe Street was the Ottawa Masonic Temple. The Ottawa Masonic Temple operated on Metcalfe Street from approximately 1912 to 1975 and was designed by architect J.A Ewart. The Metcalfe Street Temple was demolished circa 1976.



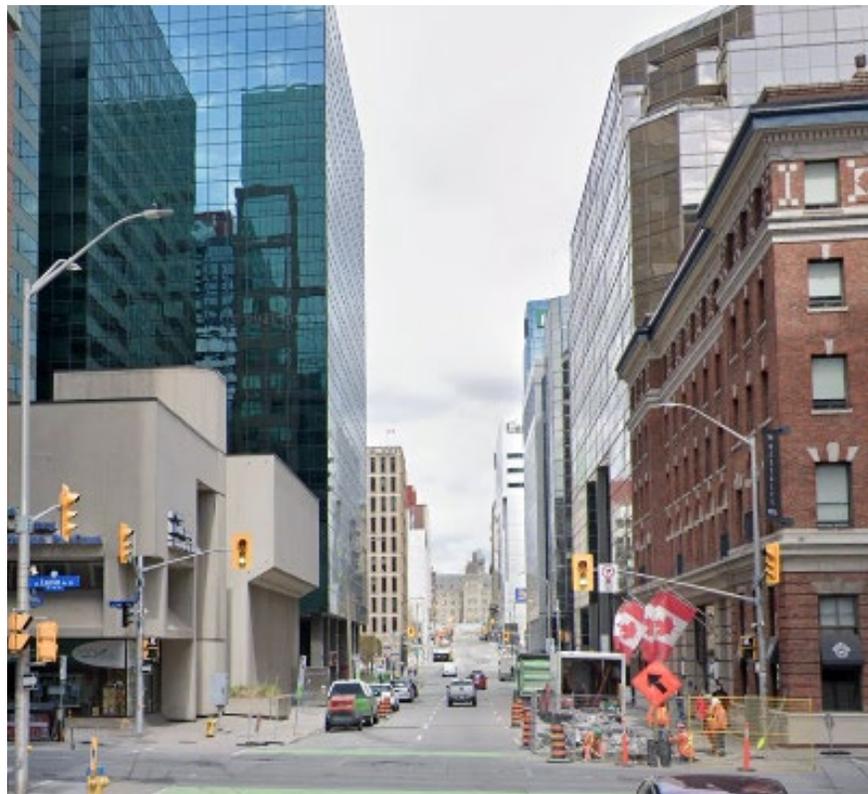
Former Ottawa Masonic Temple, 1913, Metcalfe Street near Laurier Avenue West with the YMCA building visible. William James Topley/Library and Archives Canada/PA-042725

The subject property has significant frontage on Metcalfe Street, a historic street connecting Parliament Hill to the landmark Victoria Memorial Museum.⁴⁶ Its placement along this route reflects the organization's local and national significance. The location of the YMCA was also likely influenced by surrounding civic buildings in Ottawa's downtown core. Today, the building functions as a hotel. The building's change in use reflects the area's change from an industrial, and later, civic centre to a central business and commercial district.

⁴⁶ ERA Architects, *Centretown Heritage Inventory*, 2020, 43.



Metcalfe Street, showing YMCA and Carnegie Library, ([Cliff Smith YMCA Postcard Collection at Springfield College](#), Used under Creative Commons License [CC-BY-NC-SA](#))



Metcalfe Street showing YMCA and the Ottawa Public Library Main Branch, *Google Maps*, 2020.

Criterion 9	
The property has contextual value because it is a landmark	No
Response to Criterion The subject property does not meet this criterion. While located at a prominent intersection in downtown Ottawa, the building is across the street from the main branch of the Ottawa Public Library which is considered a more immediately recognizable building for landmark and wayfinding purposes.	

Sources

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Appendix A





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