

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Description of Property

The building at 123 Metcalfe Street is a five-storey, red-brick building at the intersection of Metcalfe Street and Laurier Avenue West.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The property located at 123 Metcalfe Street has design value as a representative example of a purpose built early twentieth-century YMCA building, featuring elements of the Italianate, Edwardian, and Renaissance Revival architectural styles. Constructed in 1909 as the second building 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.

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 demonstrates the work of an architect significant to the Canadian architectural community.

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 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.

The building at 123 Metcalfe Street has historical value because of its direct association with the 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 twentieth century, the YMCA became known for its social, educational, and athletic programming. Since its establishment in the 19th century, the YMCA has been an important community organization in Ottawa.

The building 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 local YMCAs is nearly non-existent, scholars, historians, and local experts have begun to speculate about the nature of 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.

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.

Description of Heritage Attributes

Key exterior attributes that contribute to the cultural heritage value of 123 Metcalfe Street as a representative example of a purpose built early twentieth-century YMCA building include:

- Red brick cladding
- Regularly spaced window openings on Metcalfe and Laurier facades
- Centrally located entrances on Metcalfe and Laurier facades
- Decorative window elements, including:
 - Round headed arches
 - Brick voussoirs
 - Keystones
 - Cast stone sills
 - Tympanum panels decorated with garland half-relief
- Decorative brick and cast stone panels
- Secondary cornices
- Terra cotta frieze and cornice at top of fifth storey
- Brick stepped parapet above fifth storey