

Ontario Regulation 9/06 Assessment

152 Rideau Street

May 2024

Prepared by: Heritage Staff



Executive Summary

Constructed circa 1898, the property at 152 Rideau Street is a three-storey commercial building in the Romanesque Revival style. The building at 152 Rideau Street houses several typical main street businesses, including its original tenants, the Bate & Co. wholesale grocery store.

The property is part of a large grouping of 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 four 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
Constructed circa 1898, the building at 152 Rideau Street has design value as a good example of the Romanesque Revival style commercial building on a main street in Ottawa. The Romanesque Revival style was popular in Canada from the 1840s to the early 1900s. The style was frequently used in civic, commercial, institutional, and religious buildings. The building at 152 Rideau Street features typical elements of the Romanesque Revival style including its heavy massing, decorative carved detailing, and arched window openings.	

Supporting Details

Description of Building

- The building located at 152 Rideau Street is a three-storey mixed-use building with elements of the Romanesque Revival style, constructed c.1898.
- The building is clad in red brick with stone accents.
- The ground floor of the building features a storefront with three recessed entrances.
- Above the ground floor, the building's top two storeys are symmetrical.
- The second storey features three bays of rounded-arched windows. The center window is twice the length of the windows on either side and features a wooden mullion separating the large window.
- The three window openings on the second storey are separated by pilasters with ornate capitals featuring intricate carved foliage and faces. The windows are capped with a continuous decorative arched brick surrounds.
- Between the second and third storeys, the building features repetitive decorative medallions and a dentilled brick stringcourse.
- The building's third storey features four large window openings topped with carved red stone lintels.
- The building's top two storeys are clasped by brick pilasters at either end.
- Above the third storey, the building is topped with a decorative brick stringcourse.
- The building originally featured a wooden cornice that has been removed.¹
- The building was originally constructed c.1898 for Bate & Co., a whole sale grocery store operated by Charles Thorton Bate (the 15th mayor of Ottawa), and his brother Henry Bate (the first chairman of the Ottawa Improvement Commission, now the National Capital Commission).²

¹ 1901 Fire Insurance Plan for Ottawa, sheet 29.

² "Bate Building – Recognized Federal Heritage Building," *Parks Canada*, accessed April 2024. https://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_fhbro_eng.aspx?id=2558.



1901 FIP for 152 Rideau Street.



152 Rideau Street outlined in red. *GeoOttawa*, accessed 2024.

Description of Architectural Style

The building at 152 Rideau Street is an example of the Romanesque Revival style used in a commercial building in Ottawa. The Romanesque Revival style first appeared in Canada as early as the 1840s and was popular throughout the 19th century.³ The style is inspired by the classical elements in 11th and 12th century medieval architecture.⁴

The key characteristics of Romanesque Revival style buildings include a heavy massing, brick or rusticated stone cladding, square towers, hipped and gabled roofs, and medieval-inspired classical detailing like corbel tables and elaborate capitals.⁵ Another significant feature of Romanesque Revival style buildings are their rounded-arched window and door openings, which are often topped with large voussoirs.⁶ Romanesque Revival buildings often feature elaborate decorative carvings and sculptures.⁷

Applied in commercial spaces, Romanesque Revival style buildings are similar to Italianate style buildings. They often feature three-storeys and repetitive rounded-arched window openings. Both Romanesque Revival style and Italianate style were frequently used in buildings on nineteenth century main streets due to their adaptability and suitability for commercial activity.⁸

National and Local Context

The first phase of the Romanesque Revival style appeared in Canada in the 1840s. John Ruskin, a 19th century art critic, advocated for the Gothic and Romanesque styles over the use of Classical styles and Greek architecture.⁹ Due to Ruskin's inspiration, as well as the general use of revival styles in the 19th century, the Romanesque Revival became to be frequently used in commercial, civic, religious, and industrial buildings in Europe and North America.¹⁰

The second phase of Romanesque Revival was influenced by American architect, Henry Hobson Richardson. This style, referred to as Richardson Romanesque, is a lighter and smoother version of the early Romanesque Revival style.¹¹ Thomas Fuller, a British architect, used this style extensively during his time as the chief architect of the

³ Shannon Ricketts, Leslie Maitland, and Jacqueline Hucker, "The Romanesque Revival Style," *A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles – Second Edition* (Canada: Broadview Press, 2004), 93.

⁴ Shannon Ricketts, Leslie Maitland, and Jacqueline Hucker, "The Romanesque Revival Style," *A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles – Second Edition* (Canada: Broadview Press, 2004), 93.

⁵ Shannon Ricketts, Leslie Maitland, and Jacqueline Hucker, "The Romanesque Revival Style," *A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles – Second Edition* (Canada: Broadview Press, 2004), 93.

⁶ "Romanesque Revival (1840-1900)," *OntarioArchitecture.com*, accessed April 2024.

⁷ "Romanesque Revival (1840-1900)," *OntarioArchitecture.com*, accessed April 2024.

⁸ "Federal Heritage Buildings, Marshall Building, Ottawa, Ontario," *Parks Canada*, accessed April 2024.

⁹ "Romanesque Revival (1840-1900)," *OntarioArchitecture.com*, accessed April 2024.

¹⁰ "Romanesque Revival (1840-1900)," *OntarioArchitecture.com*, accessed April 2024.

¹¹ "Romanesque Revival (1840-1900)," *OntarioArchitecture.com*, accessed April 2024.

Department of Public Works in Canada from 1881 to 1896.¹² Under Fuller's direction, many post offices in Canada were constructed in the Richardson Romanesque style.¹³

The Romanesque Revival style was meant to evoke a sense of permanence and stability. As such, it was a popular choice for important 19th century civic, commercial, and religious buildings in Canada.¹⁴ In Ottawa, the Romanesque Revival style is featured in churches and in commercial buildings on historic main streets.



This building at 428 Bank Street was also a Bate & Co. grocery store.¹⁵ The architecture is near identical to the building at 152 Rideau Street. *Google Images*, 2024.

¹² Shannon Ricketts, Leslie Maitland, and Jacqueline Hucker, "The Romanesque Revival Style," *A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles – Second Edition* (Canada: Broadview Press, 2004), 97.

¹³ "A Chronology of Canadian Postal History – 1881 Thomas Fuller," *Canadian Museum of History*, accessed April 2024. <https://www.historymuseum.ca/cmhc/exhibitions/cpm/chrono/ch1881ae.html>.

¹⁴ Shannon Ricketts, Leslie Maitland, and Jacqueline Hucker, "The Romanesque Revival Style," *A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles – Second Edition* (Canada: Broadview Press, 2004), 97.

¹⁵ "Bate & Co." *Urbsite.blogspot.com*, accessed April 2024.



219 Bank Street, designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, is simpler example of the Romanesque Revival style in a commercial building in Ottawa. *Google Maps*, 2019.



The Union Bank Building at 128 Wellington Street, a federally recognized heritage building, featuring the Romanesque Revival style used for an institutional building.¹⁶

¹⁶ "Union Bank Building – Federal Heritage Buildings," *Parks Canada*, accessed April 2024. https://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_fhbros_eng.aspx?id=2467.



Designed by W.E. Noffke, St. Theresa's Roman Catholic Church at 95 Somerset is an example of the Romanesque Revival used in a religious building. *City of Ottawa*, 2023.

Criterion 2

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

Yes

The property at 152 Rideau Street has design value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship for a commercial property on Rideau Street. This is demonstrated through the building's decorative carved foliage motifs and chiseled stonework. There are few examples of a commercial building with this level of craftsmanship on Rideau Street, making it unique on its streetscape.

Supporting Details

The property at 152 Rideau Street displays a high degree of craftsmanship for an early commercial Romanesque Revival building on Rideau Street. The building exhibits elaborate sculptural detailing, which is often a definitive element of Romanesque Revival style buildings.¹⁷

The building at 152 Rideau Street features intricate stone carvings. The building's second storey features impressively ornate capital piers with carved foliage and faces. Intricate stone carvings are also seen between the second and third storeys, where the building features repetitive decorative medallions. These carvings display a level of artistry that, although common for Romanesque Revival style buildings, are not found anywhere else on Rideau Street. These carvings likely required skilled work to execute. On the third storey, the building's chiseled stone and brickwork are simpler than the carvings below, but also contribute to upholding the high craftsmanship detailing of the building.

The skill in the building's stonework is indicative of a high artistry and craftsmanship, and is unique on Rideau Street.

¹⁷ "Romanesque Revival (1840-1900)," *OntarioArchitecture.com*, accessed April 2024.



Foliage and face carvings, and medallions, on 152 Rideau Street. *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.	No
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
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
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
The building at 152 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 152 Rideau Street housed several typical main street businesses, including its original tenants, the Bate & Co. wholesale grocery store. Today, the 152 Rideau Street continues to reflect Rideau Street's history as a commercial main street in Ottawa.	

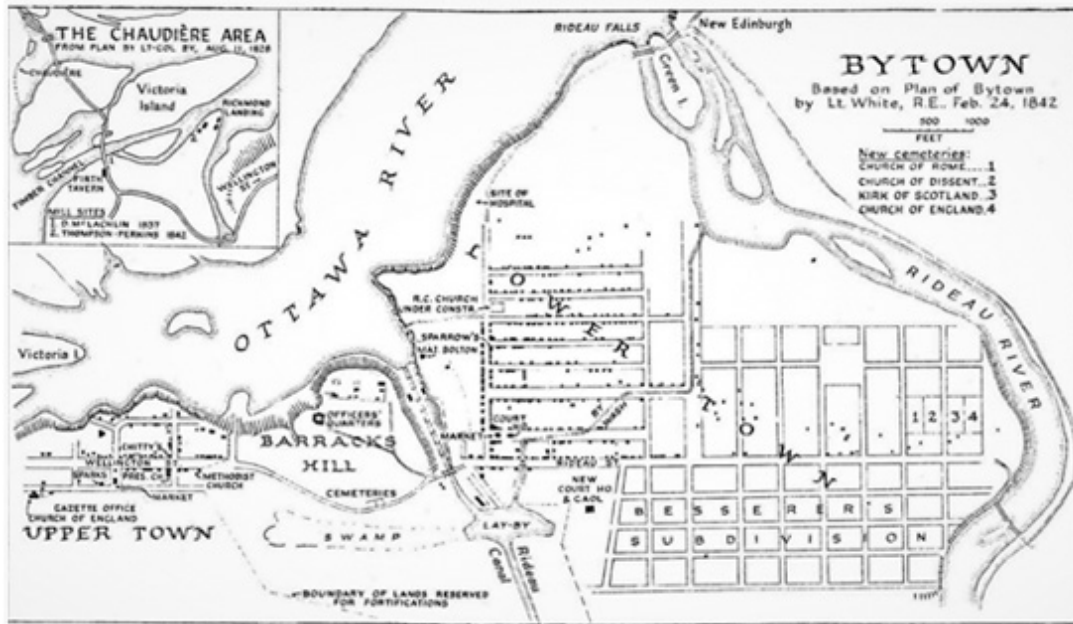
Supporting Details

The building at 152 Rideau Street has functioned as a mixed-use building with commercial space on the first storey since it's construction c.1898. The building is important in defining, 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.¹⁸ 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.¹⁹

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 1875.²⁰ 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. 1898, the building at 152 Rideau Street housed various local businesses including a grocery store, a florist, a barbershop, and a bank. The top floors of the building were used as office space and apartments. Overtime, the ground floor has been modified to suit the needs of different tenants, but the building's continued mixed-used expression makes it an essential component of Rideau Street's traditional main street character. Today, the first storey of the 152 Rideau Street continues to be used as a commercial storefront. The building at 152 Rideau Street maintains and supports the character of Rideau Street as a historic and current commercial main street.

¹⁸ City of Ottawa Planning and Growth Management. "Uptown Rideau Street Community Design Plan," *City of Ottawa*, 2015, page 26.

¹⁹ City of Ottawa Planning and Growth Management. "Uptown Rideau Street Community Design Plan," *City of Ottawa*, 2015, page 26.

²⁰ 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

Criterion 8	
The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.	Yes
The building at 152 Rideau Street is historically, functionally, and visually linked to the surrounding commercial area. This building, together with others nearby like 149 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 152 Rideau Street has consistently provided a commercial storefront 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 building types. The building at 152 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.²¹ All of these properties are designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

²¹ "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 tenants. 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.²² In 1922, the J.A. Larocque Department Store opened at 169 Rideau Street, and is now called Mercury Court.²³

²² "Charles Ogilvy Limited Department Store," *Heritage Ottawa*, accessed January 2024.

²³ 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 152 Rideau Street is situated on the south side of Rideau Street, just west of the intersection of Rideau and Nicholas Streets. The building shares a streetscape with 156-158 Rideau Street, which has operated as a commercial building since its construction in c.1918.

The building is surrounded by other historic storefronts on Rideau Street including 156-158 Rideau Street, which is directly adjoined to 152 Rideau Street, and has operated as a commercial building since its construction circa 1918. On the north side of Rideau Street across from 152 Rideau Street, 149 Rideau Street, has operated as a commercial building since its construction in c.1875, and 155 Rideau Street, known as the Clegg-Feller Building, is one of the oldest examples of commercial architecture in Ottawa and is designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.²⁴ These buildings are visually linked with each other due to their similar stylings featuring a two- to three-storey massing, brick-cladding, flat roofs, and ground level storefront with mixed-use space above. Today, each of these building's main storeys continues to function as a

²⁴ "Clegg-Feller Building|Windsor Smoke Shop," *Heritage Ottawa*, accessed March 2024.

commercial space and supports retail and commercial activity on one of Ottawa’s historic main streets.



152 and 156 Rideau Street, on the south side of Rideau Street. *City of Ottawa, 2024.*



149 and 155 Rideau Street, on the north side of Rideau Street across from 152 and 156 Rideau Street. Mercury Court is pictured in the background. *Google Maps*, accessed 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

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