

**Subject: Designation of 343 Bronson Avenue under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act***

**File Number: ACS2025-PDB-RHU-0007**

**Report to Built Heritage Committee on 11 February 2025  
and Council 26 February 2025**

**Submitted on January 31, 2025, by Court Curry, Manager, Right of Way, Heritage,  
and Urban Design Services, Planning, Development and Building Services**

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**Ward: Somerset (14)**

**Objet : Désignation du 343, avenue Bronson en vertu de la partie IV de la *Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario***

**Dossier : ACS2025-PDB-RHU-0007**

**Rapport au Comité du patrimoine bâti**

**le 11 février 2025**

**et au Conseil le 26 février 2025**

**Soumis le 31 janvier 2025 par Court Curry, Gestionnaire, Services des emprises,  
du patrimoine, et du design urbain, Direction générale des services de la  
planification, de l'aménagement et du bâtiment**

**Personne ressource : Greg MacPherson, Urbaniste du patrimoine, Planification  
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**Quartier : Somerset (14)**

## **REPORT RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Built Heritage Committee recommend that Council issue a Notice of Intention to Designate the former Erskine Presbyterian Church at 343 Bronson Avenue under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* according to the Statement of Cultural Heritage Value attached as Document 4**

## **RECOMMANDATION DU RAPPORT**

**Que le Comité du patrimoine bâti recommande au Conseil d'émettre un avis d'intention de désigner l'ancienne église presbytérienne Erskine située au 343, avenue Bronson, aux termes de la partie IV de la *Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario*, conformément à la Déclaration de la valeur de patrimoine culturel faisant l'objet du document 4 ci-joint.**

## **BACKGROUND**

This report has been prepared because designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* (OHA) must be approved by City Council.

The property located at 343 Bronson Avenue contains a stone church constructed in phases between 1901 and 1906, currently known as the Peace Tower Church. The church was originally constructed as the third church for the Erskine Presbyterian congregation. The Erskine Presbyterian congregation was one of the original Presbyterian congregations to emerge in Ottawa during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The property is located on the southeast corner at the intersection of MacLaren Street and Bronson Avenue and has cultural heritage value for its design, associative, and contextual values. It meets seven (7) of the nine (9) criteria for designation under Part IV of the OHA.

The property was listed on the City's Heritage Register in 2020. Changes to the OHA through Bill 23 (2023) and Bill 200 (2024) will result in the removal of this property from the City's Heritage Register if Council does not issue a Notice of Intention to Designate the property by January 1, 2027. Further, Council will not be able to relist the property for five years after this date. Heritage staff completed a review of all non-designated properties listed on the City's Heritage Register in response to Bill 23 in Spring of 2023 and identified this property as a potential candidate for designation.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Official Plan, Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), and the OHA all provide policy direction related to the designation of individual properties under Part IV of the OHA.

## **Official Plan**

The Official Plan has policies related to cultural heritage in Section 4.5, Cultural Heritage and Archaeology. Section 4.5.1(3) states: “Individual buildings, structures, and sites shall be designated as properties of cultural heritage value under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.”

## **Provincial Planning Statement (2024)**

The Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) replaces the former Provincial Policy Statement and came into effect on October 20, 2024. Section 4.6 of the PPS includes the following policy regarding the conservation of heritage resources:

*4. Planning authorities are encouraged to develop and implement:*

*b) proactive strategies for conserving built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes*

Policies within the City’s Official Plan, as described above, direct the designation of significant properties and comply with this policy.

Should City Council designate the property outlined in this report, it would be considered “protected heritage property” for the purposes of the PPS 2024. The PPS includes the following policy related to protected heritage property:

*1. Protected heritage property, which may contain built heritage resources or cultural heritage landscapes, shall be conserved.*

## **Ontario Heritage Act**

Part IV of the OHA provides municipalities with the authority to designate properties of cultural heritage value. Section 29 of the OHA sets out the process for the designation of individual buildings. It requires:

- that Council consult with its municipal heritage committee, and
- that the official Notice of Intention to Designate served on the owner and the Ontario Heritage Trust contain a description of the property and its heritage attributes, as well as a statement explaining the cultural heritage value or interest of the property and a statement that a notice of objection may be served on the clerk within 30 days after the date of publication of the notice of intention in a newspaper.

Per by-law 2002-522, as amended, the Notice of Intention to Designate will be published online on the City’s website in both official languages. Document 4 contains

the Statement of Cultural Heritage Value for this property.

### **Ontario Regulation 09/06**

Regulation 9/06 (see Document 3) establishes criteria to determine if a property is of cultural heritage value or interest. A property may be designated under Section 29 of the OHA if it meets two or more of the nine criteria set out in the regulation. Through research and evaluation, staff have determined that the property at 343 Bronson Avenue meets seven (7) of the nine (9) criteria. Detailed research and analysis are outlined in the Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report (see Document 5), and a brief analysis of each of the applicable criteria is provided below:

**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.**

The Erskine Presbyterian church has design value as a representative example of a church constructed in the Gothic Revival style in Ottawa. The rusticated limestone church was constructed in phases between 1901 and 1906. The southern portion of the church was constructed in 1901 and a large addition to the north was completed in 1906. The church is designed in the Gothic Revival architectural style, which was dominant in religious buildings in Canada throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The church features traditional elements of the Gothic Revival style including pointed arched openings, pier buttresses, prominent towers, steep gables, and a tall spire.

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

The Erskine Presbyterian Church has design value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship. The building's craftsmanship is demonstrated through its decorative stone details, rusticated stone cladding, and the use of coloured, leaded, and stained glass. These features are attributed to the work of talented architects and builders and skillful manual labour.

**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.**

The Erskine Presbyterian Church is directly associated with the growth of Ottawa's early Presbyterian community. Established in 1870, the Erskine Presbyterian congregation was one of the first to emerge in Ottawa during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The congregation opened their first church in Rochesterville, currently West Centretown, in 1877. Originally known as the Presbyterian Church of Rochesterville, it was the first

Presbyterian church in the west end of Ottawa. Due to the early expansion of Rochesterville and LeBreton Flats, the congregation experienced rapid growth and, in 1887, opened a larger church at Elm and Preston Streets. This church was destroyed by “The Great Fire” in 1900. As a result, in 1900, the Erskine Presbyterian Church purchased the lot at Bronson Avenue and MacLaren Street and opened the original church building in 1901. The site was selected for its proximity to the Somerset streetcar, as well as its location in a rapidly expanding part of Ottawa. The Erskine Presbyterian Church existed in this building until 2007, when they closed, and the congregation amalgamated with the Westminster Presbyterian Church. In 2009, the church re-opened as the current Peace Tower Church, which it continues to function as today.

**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.**

The Erskine Presbyterian Church has historical and associative value because it reflects the work of John Pritchard MacLaren (1865-1951), one of Ottawa’s most well-known 19<sup>th</sup> century architects. MacLaren practiced in Ottawa from 1898 until his retirement in 1945. During his career, MacLaren worked in a variety of styles and typologies including residential, civic, and religious buildings. MacLaren is best known for designing several Gothic Revival churches in Ottawa and eastern Ontario, including the Erskine Presbyterian Church (1901, 1906), the Centretown United Church (formerly the Stewarton Presbyterian Church, constructed 1906), and the St. Giles Presbyterian Church in the Glebe (constructed 1929). MacLaren’s work on the Erskine Presbyterian Church demonstrates his use of the Gothic Revival style in an early ecclesiastical building in Ottawa.

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

The Erskine Presbyterian Church has contextual value because it is important in defining and maintaining the character of the west area of Centretown and Bronson Avenue. The church is located in the area of west Centretown on Bronson Avenue, which experienced an early wave of development in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by Ottawa’s elite and lumber barons. The west area of Centretown is characterized by residential buildings from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. As an important religious institution constructed between 1901 and 1906, the church maintains and defines the historic character of the west area of Centretown and Bronson Avenue.

**The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.**

The Erskine Presbyterian Church has contextual value because it is historically and functionally linked to its surroundings. The growth of this area of Centretown in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries contributed to Bronson Avenue's development as a hub for 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century institutional and religious buildings. As a place of worship, the Erskine Presbyterian Church is historically and functionally linked to the institutional character of this area of Centretown.

**The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.**

The Erskine Presbyterian Church is a landmark on Bronson Avenue and in west Centretown. The church has prominent frontage on Bronson Avenue, which makes it distinct on the streetscape. The church's tall spire is visible from the side streets and parks throughout the west Centretown neighbourhood.

**Conclusion**

The property at 343 Bronson Avenue meets 7 of the 9 criteria for designation outlined in Ontario Regulation 9/06 for designation under Part IV of the OHA. Staff recommend that Council issue a Notice of Intention to Designate the property under Part IV of the OHA.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications associated with implementing the report recommendation.

**COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR**

The Ward Councillor is aware of the recommendations of this report.

**CONSULTATION**

The property owner was notified of the proposed designation by letter on December 17, 2024. The letter was sent by courier and a signature was obtained to confirm delivery. The letter included information about the designation process, instructions on how to participate and an offer to meet with staff to discuss and answer any questions. Staff did not receive any correspondence from the property owner. A second letter was sent to the property owner on January 14, 2025. Staff also attempted to contact the owner by email in January 2025.

The Centretown Community Association and Heritage Ottawa have also both been notified of this proposed designation.

The ward Councillor is aware of the proposed designation and supports staff's recommendation.

### **ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS**

The designation of these properties under the *Ontario Heritage Act* does not impact the physical fabric of the buildings. While alterations to designated properties, including renovations to remove barriers for people with disabilities, require a heritage permit, the fees for these permits are waived and staff work with property owners to allow for accessibility retrofits.

### **ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no asset management implications.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no risk implications.

### **RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no rural implications.

### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

Document 1 Location Map

Document 2 Photos

Document 3 Ontario Regulation 9/06

Document 4 Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report

Document 5 Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

### **DISPOSITION**

If Council does not carry the recommendation, no further steps are required. If Council proceeds with the issuance of a Notice of Intention to Designate for the property located at 343 Bronson Avenue, several actions must be taken:

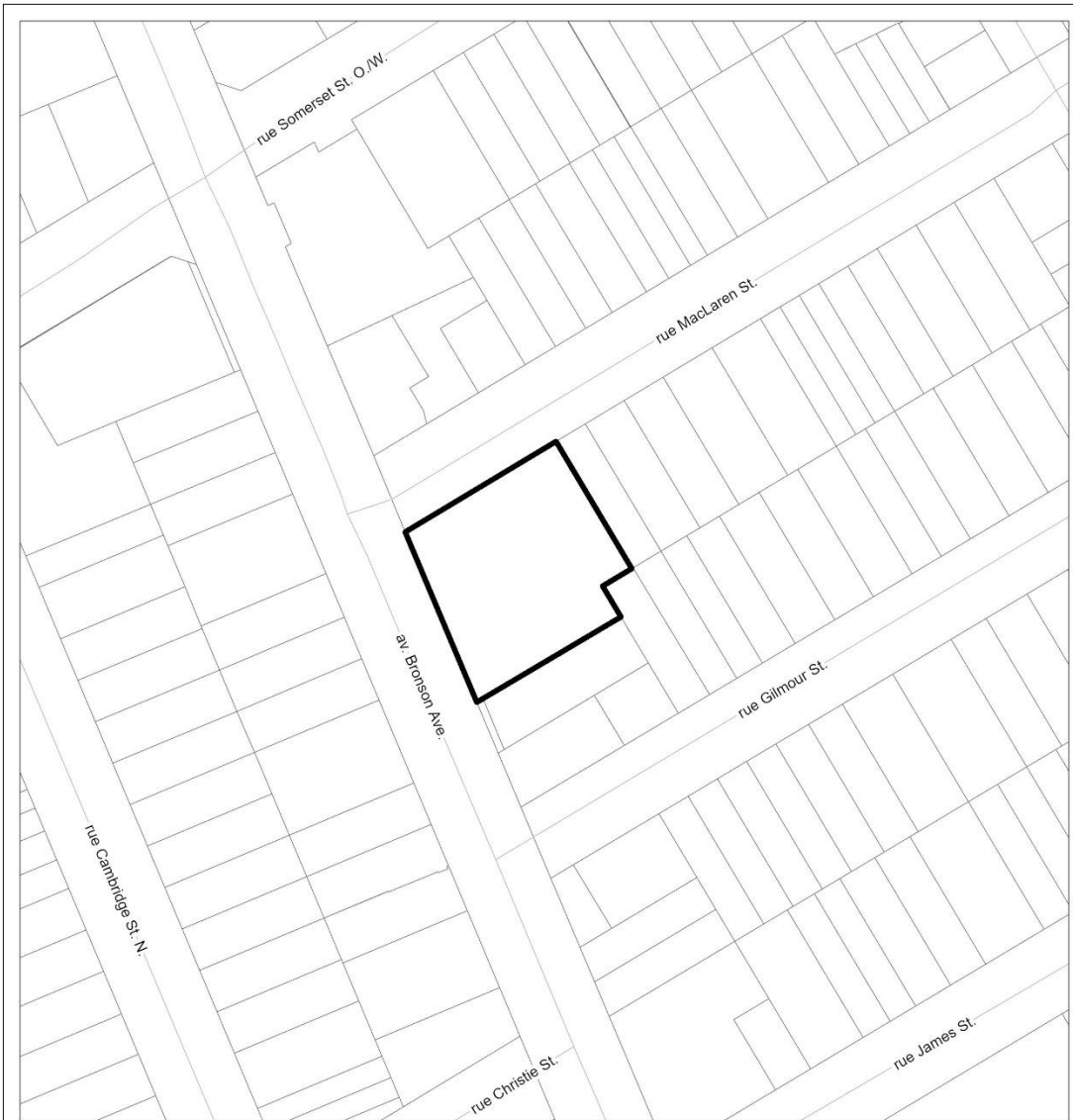
- 1) Heritage Planning Branch, Planning Development and Building Services Department, to prepare the Notice of Intention to Designate. Office of the City Clerk, Council and Committee Services to notify the property owner and the

Ontario Heritage Trust (10 Adelaide Street East, 3rd Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M5C 1J3) of Council's decision to issue a Notice of Intention to Designate the property at 343 Bronson Avenue under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

- 2) Heritage Planning Branch, Planning Development and Building Services Department to ensure publication of the Notice of Intention to Designate according to the requirements of Section 29 the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- 3) If the City Clerk receives a Notice of Objection under Section 29(5) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* within thirty days of the publication of the Notice of Intention to Designate, the Heritage Planning Branch, Planning, Development and Building Services Department is to prepare a report regarding the objection for consideration by Council within 90 days after conclusion of the objection period, according to Section 29 (6) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- 4) If the City Clerk does not receive any Notice of Objection under Section 29 (5) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* within thirty days of the publication of the Notice of Intention to Designate, or if City Council decides not to withdraw the notice of intention to designate the property after an objection has been served, the Heritage Planning Branch, Planning, Development and Building Services Department, is to prepare the designation by-law, under the authority of the approval of this report and Legal Services to submit to City Council for enactment within 120 days of the publication of the Notice of Intention to Designate as prescribed in Section 29(8) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- 5) Office of the City Clerk, Council and Committee Services to cause a copy of the by-law together with a statement explaining the cultural heritage value or interest of the property and a description of the heritage attributes of the property, to be served on the owner of the property and on the Trust according to the requirements of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Heritage Planning Branch, Planning, Development and Building Services Department to ensure publication of the notice of the by-law in the newspaper according to the requirements Section 29(8)(4) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.




Document 1 – Location Map





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REVISION / RÉVISION - 2025 / 01 / 06	

LOCATION MAP / PLAN DE LOCALISATION  
HERITAGE / PATRIMOINE

 **343 av. Bronson Ave.**



**Document 2 – Photos**



Bronson Avenue elevation (Staff Photo, 2024)



Tower at Bronson Avenue and MacLaren Street. (Staff Photo, 2024)

**Document 3 – Ontario Regulation 9/06****CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST**

**Consolidation Period:** From January 1, 2023 to the e-Laws currency date.

Last amendment: 569/22.

***This is the English version of a bilingual regulation.***

*Criteria, s. 27 (3) (b) of the Act*

1. (1) The criteria set out in subsection (2) are prescribed for the purposes of clause 27 (3) (b) of the Act. O. Reg. 569/22, s. 1.

(2) Property that has not been designated under Part IV of the *Act* may be included in the register referred to in subsection 27 (1) of the *Act* on and after the day subsection 3 (2) of Schedule 6 to the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022* comes into force if the property meets one or more of the following criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest:

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.
2. The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.
3. The property has design value or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.
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.
5. The property has historical value or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.
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.

7. The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.
8. The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.
9. The property has contextual value because it is a landmark. O. Reg. 569/22, s. 1.

(3) For clarity, subsection (2) does not apply in respect of a property that has not been designated under Part IV but was included in the register as of the day subsection 3 (2) of Schedule 6 to the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022* comes into force. O. Reg. 569/22, s. 1.

*Criteria, s. 29 (1) (a) of the Act*

**2.** (1) The criteria set out in subsections (2) and (3) are prescribed for the purposes of clause 29 (1) (a) of the Act. O. Reg. 569/22, s. 1.

(2) Section 1, as it read immediately before the day subsection 3 (2) of Schedule 6 to the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022* comes into force, continues to apply in respect of a property for which a notice of intention to designate it was given under subsection 29 (1.1) of the *Act* after January 24, 2006 and before the day subsection 3 (2) of Schedule 6 to the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022* comes into force. O. Reg. 569/22, s. 1.

(3) In respect of a property for which a notice of intention to designate it is given under subsection 29 (1.1) of the *Act* on or after the day subsection 3 (2) of Schedule 6 to the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022* comes into force, the property may be designated under section 29 of the *Act* if it meets two or more of the criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest set out in paragraphs 1 to 9 of subsection 1 (2). O. Reg. 569/22, s. 1.

*Criteria, s. 41 (1) (b) of the Act*

**3.** (1) The criteria set out in subsection (2) are prescribed for the purposes of clause 41 (1) (b) of the Act. O. Reg. 569/22, s. 1.

(2) Subject to subsection (3), in the case of a by-law passed under subsection 41 (1) of the *Act* on or after the day subsection 5 (1) of Schedule 6 to the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022* comes into force, a municipality or any defined area or areas of it may be designated by such a by-law as a heritage conservation district under subsection 41

(1) of the *Act* if the municipality or the defined area or areas of it meets the following criteria:

1. At least 25 per cent of the properties within the municipality or defined area or areas satisfy two or more of the following:
  - i. The properties have design value or physical value because they are rare, unique, representative or early examples of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.
  - ii. The properties have design value or physical value because they display a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.
  - iii. The properties have design value or physical value because they demonstrate a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.
  - iv. The properties have historical value or associative value because they have a direct association with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.
  - v. The properties have historical value or associative value because they yield, or have the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.
  - vi. The properties have historical value or associative value because they demonstrate or reflect the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.
  - vii. The properties have contextual value because they define, maintain or support the character of the district.
  - viii. The properties have contextual value because they are physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to each other.
  - ix. The properties have contextual value because they are defined by, planned around or are themselves a landmark. O. Reg. 569/22, s. 1.

(3) Subsection (2) does not apply in respect of a by-law passed under subsection 41 (1) of the *Act* on or after the day subsection 5 (1) of Schedule 6 to the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022* comes into force if a notice of a public meeting required to be held for the purposes of the by-law under subsection 41.1 (7) of the *Act* was given before the

day subsection 5 (1) of Schedule 6 to the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022* comes into force. O. Reg. 569/22, s. 1.

(4) For clarity, the requirement set out in subsection 41.1 (5.1) of the Act,

(a) does not apply in respect of a by-law under subsection 41 (1) of the *Act* that is passed before the day subsection 5 (1) of Schedule 6 to the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022* comes into force; and

(b) does not apply in respect of a by-law under subsection 41.1 (2) of the Act. O. Reg. 569/22, s. 1.

## **Document 4 – Statement of Cultural Heritage Value**

### **Description of Property**

The Erskine Presbyterian Church at 343 Bronson Avenue, currently known as the Peace Tower Church, is a stone church constructed in phases between 1901 and 1906 located on the southeast corner at the intersection of MacLaren Street and Bronson Avenue

### **Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest**

The Erskine Presbyterian Church has historical value through its direct association with the growth of Ottawa's early Presbyterian community.

The Erskine Presbyterian congregation originated in 1870 and constructed their first church in Rochesterville, a former village located in what is now Centretown West, in 1877. Originally known as the Presbyterian Church of Rochesterville, it was the first Presbyterian Church in the west end of Ottawa. Due to the early expansion of Rochesterville and LeBreton Flats, the congregation experienced rapid growth and, in 1887, opened a larger church at Elm and Preston Streets. This church was destroyed by "The Great Fire" in 1900. As a result, in 1900, the Erskine Presbyterian Church purchased the lot at Bronson Avenue and MacLaren Street and opened the original church building in 1901. The site was selected for its proximity to the Somerset streetcar, as well as its location in a growing part of Ottawa. The Erskine Presbyterian Church existed in this building until 2007, when they closed, and the congregation amalgamated with the Westminster Presbyterian Church.

The Erskine Presbyterian Church is a representative example of a Gothic Revival church in Ottawa. The rusticated limestone church was constructed in phases between 1901 and 1906. The church features traditional elements of the Gothic Revival style including pointed arched openings, buttresses, prominent towers, steep gables, and a tall spire. The church displays a high degree of craftsmanship through its decorative stone details, rusticated stone cladding, and the use of coloured, leaded, and stained glass. The church was designed by John Pritchard MacLaren, one of Ottawa's most prominent architects from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, best known for designing several Gothic Revival churches in Ottawa and eastern Ontario.

The Erskine Presbyterian Church has contextual value because it is important in defining and maintaining the character of the west area of Centretown and Bronson Avenue, both of which experienced early waves of development in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. As an important early religious institution in the neighbourhood, the church maintains and defines the historic character of west area of Centretown and Bronson

Avenue. As a place of worship, the Erskine Presbyterian Church is historically and functionally linked to the institutional character of this area of Centretown. With prominent frontage on Bronson Avenue and a tall spire visible from side streets and parks throughout the surrounding neighbourhood, the church is a landmark on Bronson Avenue and in the west area of Centretown.

### **Description of Heritage Attributes**

Key exterior attributes that contribute to the cultural heritage value of the Erskine Presbyterian Church as a representative example of a church designed in the Gothic Revival style include:

- Rusticated stone cladding
- Rusticated stone foundation
- Irregular footprint consisting of rectangular 1901 section and cruciform 1906 addition
- Asymmetrical façades with front gable bays
- Stone buttresses
- Pointed arched and lancet window openings
- Decorative stone elements including sills, voussoirs, hood moulds, stone surrounds, label stops, trefoils, and stringcourses
- Large pointed arched stained glass windows on west and north facades with lancet and rose tracery
- Ground level entrances with pointed arched door openings and decorative features including
  - Stone hood moulds
  - Stone drip edges
  - Stone label stops
  - Transoms with tracery and stained glass
- Tower on northwest corner including
  - Metal clad spire with turrets, finials, and gable dormers



- Regularly spaced and stepped pointed arched and rectangular window openings
- Stone buttresses
- 1901 date stone on west façade

## Document 5 – Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report

### Ontario Regulation 9/06 Assessment

343 Bronson Avenue

October 2024

Prepared by: Heritage Staff

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### Executive Summary

The Erskine Presbyterian Church at 343 Bronson Avenue is a stone church located at the intersection of MacLaren Street and Bronson Avenue. The church was constructed in phases between 1901 and 1906 as the third church for the Erskine Presbyterian congregation. The Erskine Presbyterian congregation was one of the original Presbyterian congregations to emerge in Ottawa during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The church was designed by John Pritchard MacLaren, one of Ottawa's most prominent 19<sup>th</sup> century architects, best known for designing several Gothic Revival churches in Ottawa and eastern Ontario. The Erskine Presbyterian Church is representative of the Gothic Revival style in an early ecclesiastical building in Ottawa. It has design value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship, through its intricate stone detailing, rusticated stone cladding, and the use of coloured, leaded, and stained glass. The church maintains and defines the west area of Centretown, which is characterized largely by residential, commercial, and institutional buildings from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. As a place of worship with prominent frontage on Bronson Avenue, the property is historically and functionally linked to the institutional character of this area of Centretown, and landmark on Bronson Avenue and in west Centretown.

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

<b>Criterion 1</b>	
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.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Response to Criterion</b>	
The Erskine Presbyterian church has design value as a representative example of a church constructed in the Gothic Revival style in Ottawa. The rusticated limestone church was constructed in phases between 1901 and 1906. The southern portion of the church was constructed in 1901 and a large addition to the north was completed in 1906. The church is designed in the Gothic Revival architectural style, which was dominant in religious buildings in Canada throughout the 19 <sup>th</sup> and 20 <sup>th</sup> centuries. The church features traditional elements of the Gothic Revival style including pointed arched openings, pier buttresses, prominent towers, steep gables, and a tall spire.	

### **Supporting Details**

The building at 343 Bronson Avenue is a rusticated limestone church constructed in the Gothic Revival style.<sup>1</sup> It is located on the southeast corner of the intersection of MacLaren Street and Bronson Avenue, with frontage on both streets. The building was constructed in phases between 1901 and 1906 as the Erskine Presbyterian Church.



The Peace Tower Church, formerly the Erskine Presbyterian Church, on the southeast corner of the intersection of MacLaren Street and Bronson Avenue. *GeoOttawa*, 2024.

### **Description of Building**

The southern portion of the building was constructed in 1901 as the original church building. The northern portion of the building, which has a cruciform floorplan consisting of a rectangular nave with transepts, was constructed as an addition between 1905 and 1906. When the addition opened in 1906, the original southern portion of the building

<sup>1</sup> "Erskine Presbyterian Church Had Its Origin in a Mission Established in Rochesterville," *The Ottawa Journal*, April 25, 1914.

was converted to the congregation's Sunday School.<sup>2</sup> Typical of Gothic Revival churches, the church at Erskine Presbyterian Church features asymmetrical elevations and vertical massing through its towers, steep gables, and pointed arched openings.<sup>3</sup>



The building's footprint after the 1906 north addition, with the original 1901 footprint outlined in red. 1912 *Fire Insurance Plan*, sheet 63.



The Bronson Avenue façade of the Erskine Presbyterian Church, showing the original 1901 church (right) and the 1906 addition with the tower and spire (left). *City of Ottawa*, 2024.

The church's principal façade facing Bronson Avenue features an asymmetrical façade with a single tower in the church's northwest corner, as well as two gable bays connected by the nave. The south bay, constructed in 1901, features a set of three lancet windows with stained glass, as well as wider pointed arched windows, with stone voussoirs and sills. The south bay also includes a ground level pointed arched entrance with a wooden door featuring ornate hinges. The door is topped with a transom featuring wooden rose tracery and stained glass. The door opening is surrounded by a stone voussoir, as well as hood moulding, decorative label stops, and two stone trefoils.

<sup>2</sup> "New Erskine Church Formally Opened," *The Ottawa Journal*, February 24, 1906.

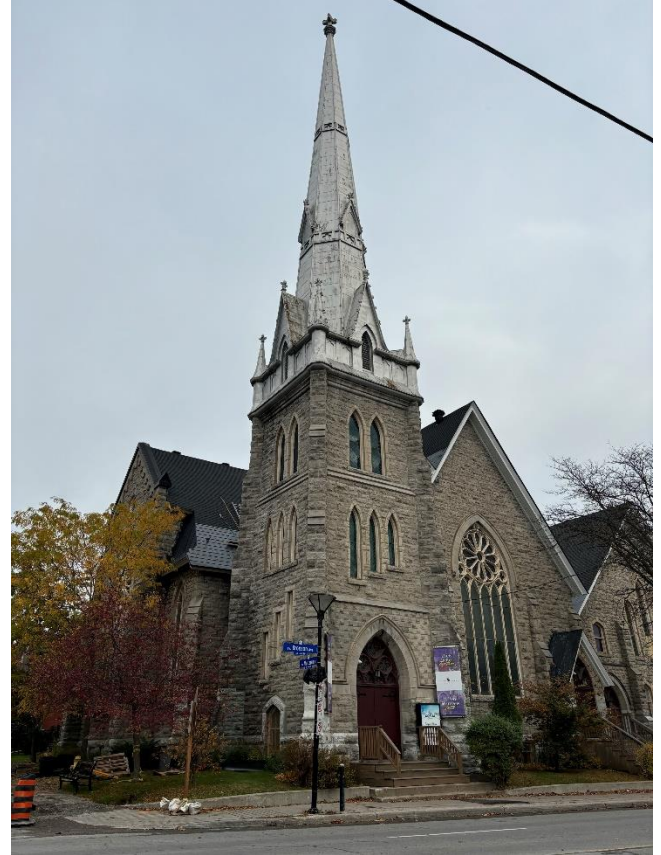
<sup>3</sup> John Blumenson, *Ontario Architecture: A Guide to Styles and Building Terms 1784-Present*, (Canada: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1990), 47.



The church's south bay, *City of Ottawa*, 2024.

The north bay, constructed in 1906, features a large stained glass window with wooden rose tracery. This window opening is topped with hood moulding with decorative label stops. The Bronson Avenue façade of the north bay also includes two raised entrances—both with same hinges, transoms, and stone voussoirs as the south bay. One of the raised entrances is in a projecting bay, and the other is at the base of the church's tower. Both the north and south bay facades also include pier buttresses.





The church's south bay and corner tower, *City of Ottawa*, 2024.

The church's tower is topped with a distinct tall metal clad spire. The base of the spire features cylindrical turrets and steeply gabled dormers with pointed arched louvered windows. The spire, turrets, and dormers are all topped with finials. The tower features two sets of pointed arched windows with leaded glass, buttresses, and stone stringcourses.

The north bay's façade on MacLaren Street is similar to its Bronson Avenue façade, as it features a large stained glass window with rose tracery, buttresses, and stone stringcourses. The church's MacLaren Street façade and rear façade feature multiple pointed arched window openings of various sizes.

### *Description of Architectural Style*

The Erskine Presbyterian Church is a representative example of the Gothic Revival style. The Gothic Revival style drew inspiration from Gothic architecture, which flourished in Europe during the medieval era.<sup>4</sup> The revival movement gained popularity in England in the 1740s, and first appeared in Canada in the 1820s.<sup>5</sup> The Gothic Revival style had broad appeal and became more widespread in the third quarter of the 19th century. Gothic Revival architecture was massively popular in Ontario and was the most

<sup>4</sup> "Gothic Revival," *Ontario Heritage Trust*, accessed August 2024, <https://www.heritagetrust.on.ca/places-of-worship/places-of-worship-database/architecture/architectural-style>.

<sup>5</sup> "Gothic Revival," *Ontario Heritage Trust*, accessed August 2024, <https://www.heritagetrust.on.ca/places-of-worship/places-of-worship-database/architecture/architectural-style>.

common style for religious buildings in the mid- to late 19th century. The emergence of Gothic Revival coincided with Ontario's early settlement by Europeans and was at the height of its popularity just as many of Ontario's towns and cities began to boom.<sup>6</sup>

In the 1840s, ecclesiastical Gothic Revival architecture in Canada came to be recognized through its historically accurate references to medieval churches. Quintessential characteristics of Gothic Revival churches in Canada include prominent towers, spires, buttresses, steeply pitched roofs, carved stone, and pointed arched window openings.<sup>7</sup> Other frequently used elements of the Gothic Revival style include hood mouldings and stops over windows and doors, rose windows, pinnacles, and crenelation.<sup>8</sup>

In Gothic Revival churches, there is a distinct and strong relationship between the exterior and interior design of buildings. From the exterior of Gothic Revival churches, the layout of the nave, transept, and chancel is easily discernable.<sup>9</sup>

### *Local and National Context*

In Canada, Gothic Revival architecture was the most prominent, revolutionary, and long-lasting revival style. It first appeared in Canada in the 1820s and was consistently used well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly in religious buildings.<sup>10</sup> In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the Gothic Revival style had become known as the preferred style of architecture for Christian places to worship.<sup>11</sup>

The Gothic Revival style is a prominent style in Ottawa, most notably used in the Parliament Buildings.<sup>12</sup> The style was also used in over 80 places of worship in Ottawa.<sup>13</sup> These buildings were all constructed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries for a variety of denominations in both brick and stone construction. Some examples of the Gothic Revival style in Ottawa churches include the Christ Church Cathedral, St. Luke's Anglican Church, Southminster United Church and the First Baptist Church.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> "Gothic Revival," *Ontario Heritage Trust*, accessed August 2024, <https://www.heritagetrust.on.ca/places-of-worship/places-of-worship-database/architecture/architectural-style>.

<sup>7</sup> Shannon Ricketts, Leslie Maitland, and Jacqueline Hucsker, *A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles – Second Edition* (Canada: Broadview Press, 2004), 62.

<sup>8</sup> Shannon Ricketts, Leslie Maitland, and Jacqueline Hucsker, *A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles – Second Edition* (Canada: Broadview Press, 2004), 55.

<sup>9</sup> Shannon Ricketts, Leslie Maitland, and Jacqueline Hucsker, *A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles – Second Edition* (Canada: Broadview Press, 2004), 62.

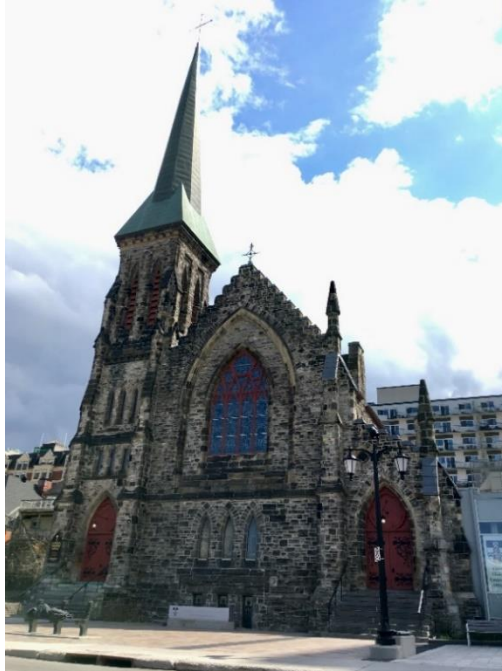
<sup>10</sup> Shannon Ricketts, Leslie Maitland, and Jacqueline Hucsker, *A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles – Second Edition* (Canada: Broadview Press, 2004), 55.

<sup>11</sup> Jennifer McKendy, "The Queen Street Methodist Churches of 1864 and 1886, Kingston, Ontario," *Journal of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada*, vol. 38 no. 1, 2013, 38.

<sup>12</sup> "Parliament Buildings National Historic Site of Canada," *Parks Canada*, accessed September 2024. [https://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page\\_nhs\\_eng.aspx?id=471&i=60436](https://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=471&i=60436).

<sup>13</sup> "Places of Worship Inventory," *Ontario Heritage Trust*, accessed September 2024.

<sup>14</sup> "Places of Worship Inventory," *Ontario Heritage Trust*, accessed September 2024.



Christ Church Cathedral at 414 Sparks Street. The building was constructed in 1832 and is designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. *City of Ottawa*, 2021.



St. Luke's Anglican Church at 760 Somerset Street West, constructed 1922 and designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. *Ottawa Chinatown*, accessed September 2024.





Southminster United Church at 1040 Bank Street, constructed 1932 and designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. *City of Ottawa*, 2023.



The First Baptist Church at 140 Laurier Avenue West, constructed 1878, designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. *Ontario Heritage Trust*, accessed October 2024.

<b>Criterion 2</b>	
The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Response to Criterion</b>	
The Erskine Presbyterian Church has design value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship. The building's artistry is demonstrated through its decorative stone details,	

rusticated stone cladding, and the use of coloured, leaded, and stained glass. These features are attributed to the work of talented architects and builders, a high-level of craftsmanship, and skillful manual labour.

### **Supporting Details**

The Erskine Presbyterian Church has design value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship. As an ecclesiastical building constructed in the Gothic Revival style, the church features a high level of detailing that is attributed to the work of talented architects and builders.<sup>15</sup>

The church displays a high degree of craftsmanship through its decorative stone carving in its stringcourses, hood moulding and label stops above window and door openings, sills, and voussoirs. The church is clad in rusticated stone. Rustication is a decorative masonry technique that requires manually cutting back stone to achieve a rough finish.<sup>16</sup> The rustication of the subject building's stone cladding, and the carved stone detailing, would have required skilled manual labour to create and demonstrate a high level of craftsmanship. The building's artistry is also evident in its elaborate stained glass, coloured, and leaded windows, and tracery on the exterior.



Carved stone hood moulding and label stop.

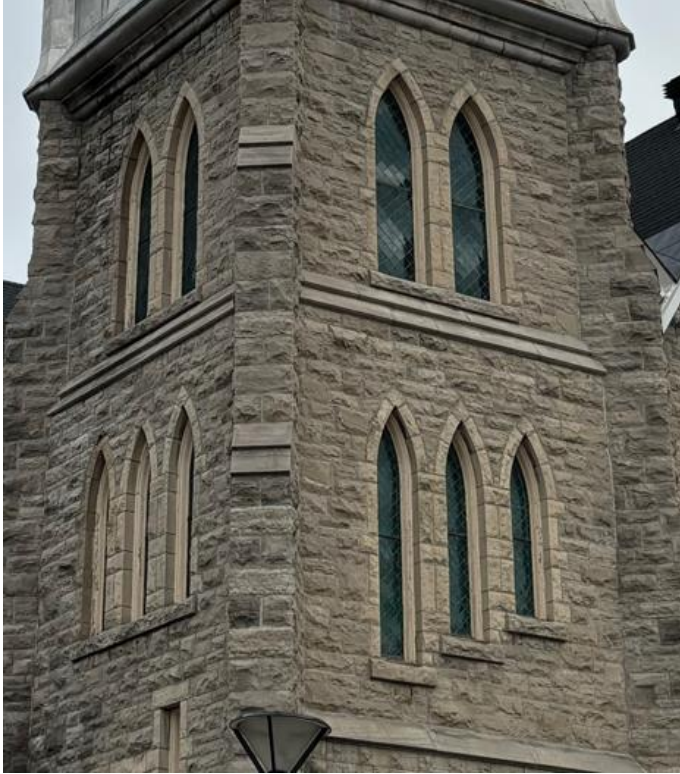


Pointed arched window openings with stained glass windows and rusticated stone voussoirs and sills.

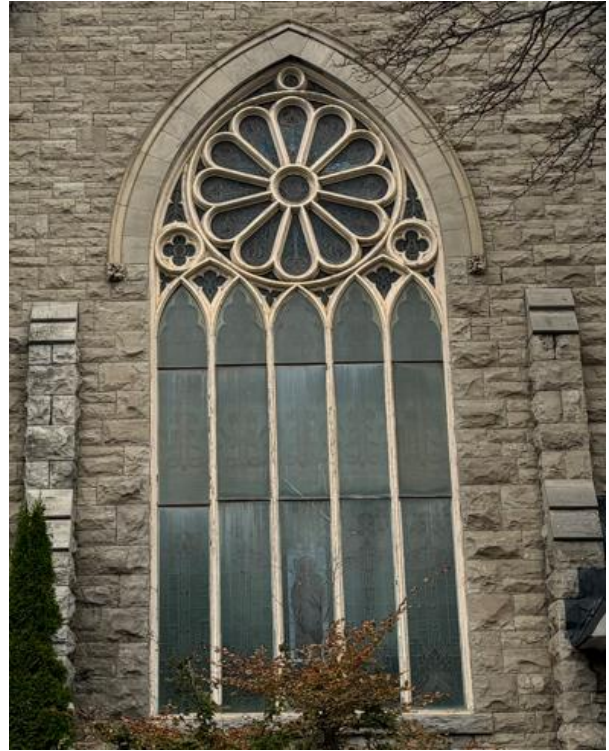
<sup>15</sup> "Gothic Revival – Ecclesiological Gothic," *Ontario Heritage Trust*, accessed September 2024, <https://www.heritagetrust.on.ca/places-of-worship/places-of-worship-database/architecture/architectural-style>.

<sup>16</sup> "Rustication," *OntarioArchitecture.com*, accessed July 2024.





Pointed arched window openings with leaded windows and rusticated stone voussoirs and sills.



Stained glass windows with carved stone hood moulding and label stop, and tracery.

<b>Criterion 3</b>	
The property has design value or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.	<b>No</b>
<b>Response to Criterion</b>	
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.	

<b>Criterion 4</b>	
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.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Response to Criterion</b>	
The Erskine Presbyterian Church is directly associated with the growth of Ottawa's early Presbyterian community. Established in 1870, the Erskine Presbyterian congregation was one of the first to emerge in Ottawa during the 19 <sup>th</sup> century. The congregation opened their first church in Rochesterville, currently West Centretown, in 1877. Originally known as the Presbyterian Church of Rochesterville, it was the first Presbyterian church in the west end of	

Ottawa. Due to the early expansion of Rochesterville and LeBreton Flats, the congregation experienced rapid growth and, in 1887, opened a larger church at Elm and Preston Streets. This church was destroyed by “The Great Fire” in 1900. As a result, in 1900, the Erskine Presbyterian Church purchased the lot at Bronson Avenue and MacLaren Street and opened the original church building in 1901. The site was selected for its proximity to the Somerset streetcar, as well as its location in a rapidly expanding part of Ottawa. The Erskine Presbyterian Church existed in this building until 2007, when they closed, and the congregation amalgamated with the Westminster Presbyterian Church. In 2009, the church re-opened as the current Peace Tower Church, which it continues to function as today.

### **Supporting Details**

The Erskine Presbyterian Church is associated with the growth of the Presbyterian church in Ottawa. The building at 343 Bronson Avenue was constructed in phases between 1901 and 1906 as the third church for the Erskine Presbyterian Church.

Presbyterianism is a Christian denomination originating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century Protestant Reformation in Scotland.<sup>17</sup> It is founded on the teachings of the New Testament and the church is governed by Presbyters or elders—which can be either ministers or established members of a congregation.<sup>18</sup> Presbyterianism arrived in Canada with early Scottish settlers in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. In 1875, various Presbyterian bodies across Canada joined to form the Presbyterian Church in Canada.<sup>19</sup> In 1925, the United Church of Canada was created from the amalgamation of some Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregationalist churches.<sup>20</sup> In Ottawa, the first Presbyterian Church—St. Andrew’s, located on Kent and Wellington Streets—was formed in 1828 by Scottish immigrants including Thomas McKay, the Scottish stonemason hired by Colonel By to construct the Rideau Canal locks.<sup>21</sup> St. Andrew’s was established in association with the Church of Scotland, and is now part of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

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<sup>17</sup> “History in The Presbyterian Church in Canada,” *Presbyterian Church Heritage Centre*, accessed October 2024. <https://pcheritagecentre.ca/history-in-the-presbyterian-church-in-canada/>.

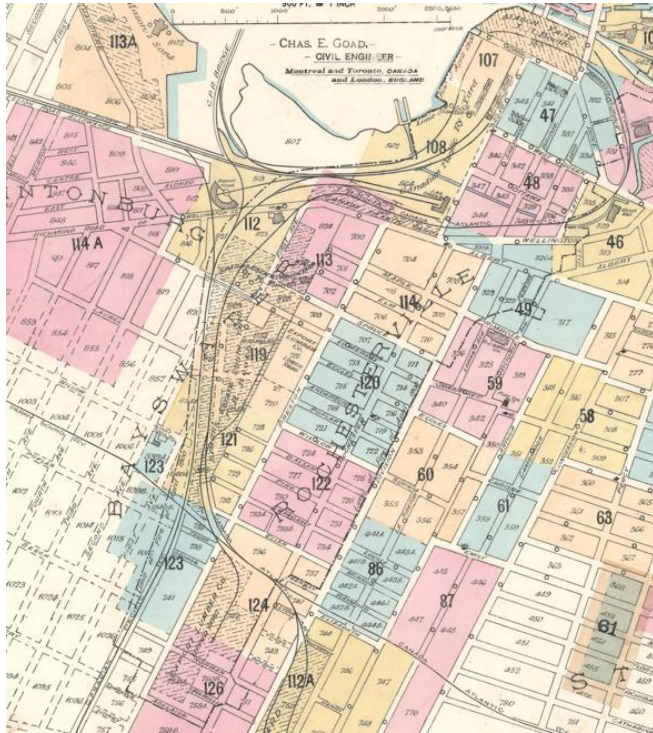
<sup>18</sup> “Becoming an Elder in the Presbyterian Church in Canada,” *The Presbyterian Church in Canada*, 2015.

<sup>19</sup> “History in The Presbyterian Church in Canada,” *Presbyterian Church Heritage Centre*, accessed October 2024. <https://pcheritagecentre.ca/history-in-the-presbyterian-church-in-canada/>.

<sup>20</sup> Rathwell, N.A., “Heritage value in Ottawa’s Dominion-Chalmers United Church: History, Community, Sight, and Sound,” *Journal of the Society for the Study of Architecture*, 43 (1), 50.

<sup>21</sup> “St. Andrew’s Historic Timeline,” *St. Andrew’s Ottawa*, accessed October 2024. <https://www.standrewsottawa.ca/timeline>.

Presbyterian congregations in Ottawa continued to emerge throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Following St. Andrew's, the Knox Presbyterian Church was established in 1844 in association with the Presbyterian Church in Canada.<sup>22</sup> The Knox Presbyterian Church constructed their first church in 1845.<sup>23</sup>



The boundaries of the historic neighbourhood of Rochesterville on the 1901 Fire Insurance Plan. 1901 Ottawa Fire Insurance Plan, Key Plan.

The first Erskine Presbyterian Church was constructed in Rochesterville (now West Centretown) in 1877. Rochesterville is the area west of Booth Street (formerly Division Street), and south of LeBreton Flats. The neighbourhood was annexed to Ottawa in 1889.<sup>24</sup> During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Rochesterville and LeBreton Flats were experiencing a wave of development and expansion due to the industrial and lumber boom of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>25</sup> Many labourers lived in LeBreton Flats and Rochesterville and both areas became largely middle-class. The growth in population created a demand for a Presbyterian church in Rochesterville.

The Erskine Presbyterian Church originated in 1870, when a group of six men from Rochesterville would gather for prayer in their houses.<sup>26</sup> In 1874, the group, which included William Kerr, James Fleming, Joseph Johnstone, and John McRae, requested that the Presbytery of the Church of Scotland organize a mission in Rochesterville.<sup>27</sup> Once the request was granted, the first Erskine Presbyterian Church was constructed in 1877 at the corner of Cedar Street and Second Avenue (now the intersection of Somerset Street and Bayswater Avenue).<sup>28</sup> Originally known as the Presbyterian Church of Rochesterville, it was it was the first Presbyterian Church in the west end of Ottawa.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Rathwell, N.A., "Heritage value in Ottawa's Dominion-Chalmers United Church: History, Community, Sight, and Sound," *Journal of the Society for the Study of Architecture*, 43 (1), 49.

<sup>23</sup> "Knox Presbyterian Church," *Congregation Records*, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, accessed November 2024.

<sup>24</sup> "West Centretown," *Neighbourhood Heritage Statement*, (City of Ottawa: 2017).

<sup>25</sup> "West Centretown," *Neighbourhood Heritage Statement*, (City of Ottawa: 2017).

<sup>26</sup> Erskine Presbyterian Church, *The First Century* (Ottawa: Erskine Presbyterian Church, 1974), 7.

<sup>27</sup> "Special Services to Commemorate 53<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of Erskine Church," *The Ottawa Journal*, February 22, 1929.

<sup>28</sup> Erskine Presbyterian Church, *The First Century* (Ottawa: Erskine Presbyterian Church, 1974), 8.

"Map of the Counties of [Carleton and Russell with a correct map of the City of Ottawa", [1857], reproduction number NMC11475, *Library and Archives Canada*.

<sup>29</sup> "Congregation of Erskine Church Celebrates Its Diamond Jubilee," *The Ottawa Journal*, February 23, 1935.

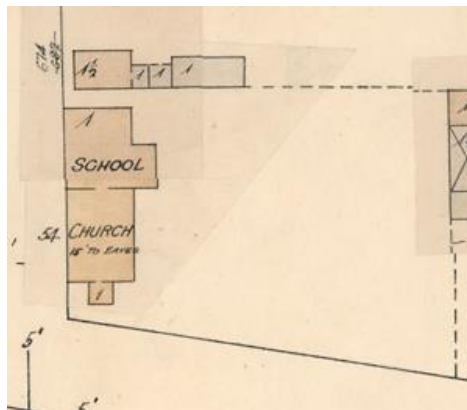


The church was in this location for 10 years, over which the west end of the city and the congregation continued to grow.<sup>30</sup> As such, in 1887, the congregation decided that a larger church was needed. In 1887, the second church, designed by prominent Ottawa architect James Mathers, opened at Elm and Preston Streets as the Erskine Presbyterian Church.<sup>31</sup> The church remained in this location until 1900, when “The Great Fire” destroyed the building, as well as thousands of buildings across Ottawa and Hull.<sup>32</sup>



The second Erskine Presbyterian Church located at Elm and Preston Streets on the 1901 Fire Insurance Plan (recorded before the fire). The building was a brick church with corner tower and a lecture hall. 1901 *Ottawa Fire Insurance Plan*, sheet 82.

After the loss of the second church, the Bank Street Presbyterian Church offered the Erskine congregation the use of their Sunday School, which was located at the corner of MacLaren Street and Bronson Avenue (formerly Concession Avenue).<sup>33</sup> The Bank Street Church Sunday School was located on the north portion of the lot on the south east corner of Bronson Avenue and MacLaren Streets, with the south portion of the lot vacant.



<sup>30</sup> “The Story of Ottawa’s Sunday Schools; How a Work Has Grown and Prospered,” *The Ottawa Journal*, October 15, 1904.

<sup>31</sup> “Special Services to Commemorate 53<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of Erskine Church,” *The Ottawa Journal*, February 22, 1929.

Erskine Presbyterian Church, *The First Century* (Ottawa: Erskine Presbyterian Church, 1974), 9.

<sup>32</sup> Erskine Presbyterian Church, *The First Century* (Ottawa: Erskine Presbyterian Church, 1974), 11.

<sup>33</sup> Erskine Presbyterian Church, *The First Century* (Ottawa: Erskine Presbyterian Church, 1974), 11.

The Bank Street Church Sunday School located on the northern portion of the lot at Bronson Avenue and MacLaren Street. *1901 Ottawa Fire Insurance Plan*, sheet 63.

The Bank Street Church Sunday School quickly became too small for Erskine's growing congregation. In 1900, the Erskine congregation decided that their new church would be located on the vacant lot adjacent to the Sunday School. The site was selected for its proximity to the Somerset streetcar, as well as its location in a rapidly expanding part of Ottawa.<sup>34</sup> In 1901, an elder member of the Erskine congregation, Alexander Young, purchased the vacant lot and transferred it to the Erskine congregation. In the same year, the Bank Street Presbyterian Church also sold their Sunday School building to the Erskine congregation.<sup>35</sup> In July 1901, the corner stone for the new Erskine Presbyterian Church was laid.<sup>36</sup>



Rendering of the 1901 Erskine Presbyterian Church, *The Ottawa Journal*, July 10, 1901.

The new church, which opened for worship on December 14, 1901, was designed by notable Ottawa architect, John Pritchard MacLaren.<sup>37</sup> By 1904, the Erskine congregation had grown to 250 congregation members and the need for a larger church once again became evident. At the annual meeting in 1905, the congregation appointed a Building Committee to prepare plans for a larger church. In 1906, the new church building opened. The building is connected to the original 1901 church, which was then converted to the church's Sunday School. The new church included a seating capacity for over a thousand people and was also designed by J.P. MacLaren.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup> "Selected a New Site," *The Ottawa Citizen*, July 12, 1900.

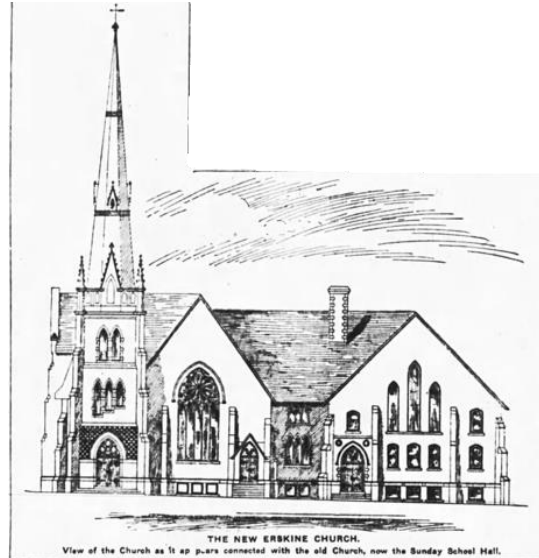
<sup>35</sup> Erskine Presbyterian Church, *The First Century* (Ottawa: Erskine Presbyterian Church, 1974), 12. "OTTAWA-CARLETON (04), OTTAWA-CARLETON, Book 589, PLAN 30671; FLORENCE NORTH; JAMES SOUTH; BRONSON EAST," accessed October 2024, <https://www.onland.ca/ui/4/books/81488/viewer/951584936?page=313>.

<sup>36</sup> "Erskine Church Corner Stone It Was Formally Laid Last Evening.," *The Ottawa Journal*, July 10, 1901.

<sup>37</sup> *The Canadian contract record*, Vol. 12, no. 11 (April 17, 1901): 2, accessed October 2024, [https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.8\\_06062\\_585](https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.8_06062_585).

"Erskine Church Corner Stone It Was Formally Laid Last Evening.," *The Ottawa Journal*, July 10, 1901.

<sup>38</sup> Erskine Presbyterian Church, *The First Century* (Ottawa: Erskine Presbyterian Church, 1974), 13.



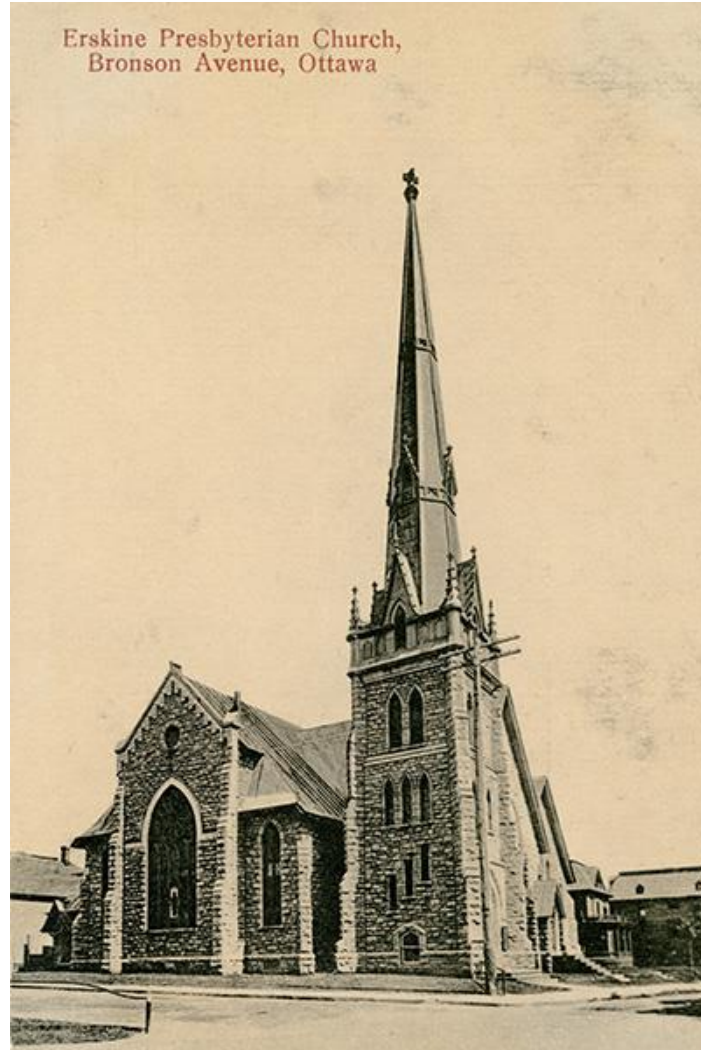
Rendering of the new Erskine Presbyterian Church. *The Ottawa Journal*, February 24, 1906.

The Erskine Presbyterian Church continued to grow throughout the early 20<sup>th</sup> century but experienced a decline in membership in the 1970s to 1990s. The church continued to offer a space for Christian worship on the edge of Centretown, as well as a community space for local initiatives including the Dalhousie Food Action Group. In 2007, the Erskine Presbyterian Church closed due to declining attendance and the congregation amalgamated with the Westminster Presbyterian Church on Roosevelt Avenue.<sup>39</sup> In 2009, the church re-opened as the current Peace Tower Church—an evangelical church associated with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> “Tearful parishioners bid adieu to century-old Erskine church,” *Centretown News Archive 1997-2006*, November 9, 2007.

<sup>40</sup> “Our Faith,” *Peace Tower Church*, accessed October 2024, <https://peacetowerchurch.ca/about/our-faith>.





Postcard of the Erskine Presbyterian Church, c.1914. A.H. Jarvis/City of Ottawa Archives/MG344-1-4-5/CA026390-W.

<b>Criterion 5</b>	
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.	<b>No</b>
<b>Response to Criterion</b> 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.	

<b>Criterion 6</b>	
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.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Response to Criterion</b> The Erskine Presbyterian Church has historical and associative value because it reflects the work of John Pritchard MacLaren (1865-1951), one of Ottawa's most well-known 19 <sup>th</sup> century	

architects. MacLaren practiced in Ottawa from 1898 until his retirement in 1945. During his career, MacLaren worked in a variety of styles and typologies including residential, civic, and religious buildings. MacLaren is best known for designing several Gothic Revival churches in Ottawa and eastern Ontario, including the Erskine Presbyterian Church (1901, 1906), the Centretown United Church (formerly the Stewarton Presbyterian Church, constructed 1906), and the St. Giles Presbyterian Church in the Glebe (constructed 1929). MacLaren's work on the Erskine Presbyterian Church demonstrates his use of the Gothic Revival style in an early ecclesiastical building in Ottawa.

### **Supporting Details**

The Erskine Presbyterian Church was designed by John Pritchard MacLaren (1865-1951), a well-known 19<sup>th</sup> century architect in Ottawa. MacLaren was born in Wakefield, Quebec in 1865 to Alexander MacLaren and Ann Pritchard.<sup>41</sup> The MacLarens were a wealthy 19<sup>th</sup> century family. They operated the MacLaren Mill in Wakefield and were active in the lumbering, papermaking, hydro-generation, and real estate.<sup>42</sup> MacLaren Street in Centretown is named after the MacLaren family.

J.P. MacLaren graduated from the University of Toronto in 1893, and after a brief partnership with David A. Hewitt in Brantford, began practicing in Ottawa in 1898. MacLaren practiced in Ottawa until his retirement in 1945.<sup>43</sup>

During his career, MacLaren worked in a variety of styles and typologies. He designed residential buildings in Centretown, the Glebe, and Rockcliffe Park, as well as several banks and libraries. MacLaren is best known for designing several Gothic Revival churches in Ottawa and eastern Ontario, including the Erskine Presbyterian Church (1901, 1906), the Centretown United Church (formerly the Stewarton Presbyterian Church, constructed 1906), and the St. Giles Presbyterian Church in the Glebe (constructed 1929).<sup>44</sup> MacLaren's work on the Erskine Presbyterian Church is



and

<sup>41</sup> "MacLaren, John Pritchard," *Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada 1800-1950*, accessed October 2024. <http://dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/node/641>

<sup>42</sup> "John Pritchard MacLaren, Architect (1865-1951): Forty Years of Stylish Variety," *Urbsite.com*, accessed October 2024. <https://urbsite.blogspot.com/2023/05/john-pritchard-maclaren-architect-1865.html?q=the+great+fire>

<sup>43</sup> "MacLaren, John Pritchard," *Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada 1800-1950*, accessed October 2024. <http://dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/node/641>

<sup>44</sup> "John Pritchard MacLaren, Architect (1865-1951): Forty Years of Stylish Variety," *Urbsite.com*, accessed October 2024. <https://urbsite.blogspot.com/2023/05/john-pritchard-maclaren-architect-1865.html?q=the+great+fire>

"MacLaren, John Pritchard," *Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada 1800-1950*, accessed October 2024. <http://dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/node/641>

"Architects," *Ontario Heritage Trust*, accessed October 2024, <https://www.heritagetrust.on.ca/places-of-worship/places-of-worship-database/architecture/architects>.

demonstrates his use of the Gothic Revival style in an early ecclesiastical building in Ottawa.



Erskine Presbyterian Church, currently the Peace Tower Church, *City of Ottawa*, 2024.

Centretown United Church, formerly the Stewarton Presbyterian Church, *Ontario Heritage Trust*, accessed 2024.



St. Giles Presbyterian Church, *Ontario Heritage Trust*, accessed 2024.

<b>Criterion 7</b>	
The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Response to Criterion</b>	
The Erskine Presbyterian Church has contextual value because it is important in defining and maintaining the character of the west area of Centretown and Bronson Avenue. The church is located in the area of west Centretown on Bronson Avenue, which experienced an early wave of development in the late 19 <sup>th</sup> century by Ottawa’s elite and lumber barons. The west area of Centretown is characterized by residential buildings from the late 19 <sup>th</sup> and early 20 <sup>th</sup> centuries. As an important religious institution constructed between 1901 and 1906, the church maintains and defines the historic character of the west Centretown and Bronson Avenue.	

**Supporting Details**

The church at 343 Bronson Avenue has contextual value because it is important in maintaining and defining the character of the west area of Centretown and Bronson Avenue. Ottawa’s Centretown neighbourhood is bounded by the Ottawa River to the north, Highway 417 to the south, Queen Elizabeth Drive and the Rideau Canal to the

east, and Bronson Avenue to the west. The subject building is in the west area of Centretown—in the area between Bronson Avenue and Bank Street.

Early development in Centretown was shaped by the 19<sup>th</sup> century lumber trade and, later, by the introduction of the British colonial government.<sup>45</sup> In the 1870s, Bronson Avenue was slowly being developed by members of Ottawa's upper class or lumber barons and their families. Bronson Avenue was an original concession line in Ottawa, offered sizable lots for families to construct large stone or brick houses along the street.<sup>46</sup> Examples include the property at 176 Bronson Avenue, known as the Cheney House, 190 Bronson Avenue, known as the Davidson House (both now designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*), and the Christie House (which became part of Immaculata School in 1929, and demolished in 1961). Constructed in 1901, during the early wave of development on Bronson Avenue, the church Erskine Presbyterian Church maintains the historic character of the street.

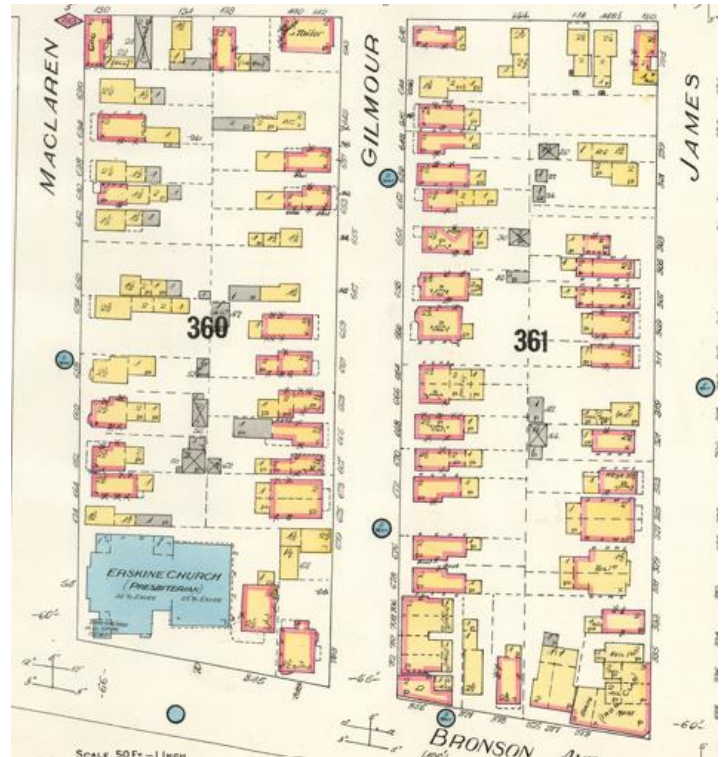
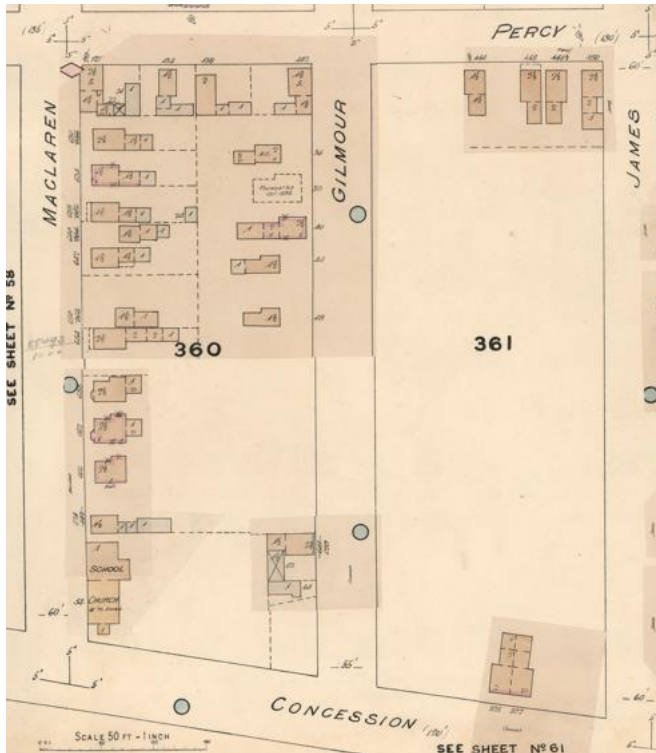
The area east of the church, between Bronson Avenue and Bank Street, also developed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as a residential neighbourhood. Part of the essential fabric of early residential neighbourhoods was the proximity of churches. The Erskine Presbyterian Church defines and maintains the character of the historic residential area between Bronson Avenue and Bank Street as an important religious institution for the surrounding neighbourhood.

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<sup>45</sup> "Centretown," *Neighbourhood Heritage Statement*, City of Ottawa, 2020.

<sup>46</sup> ERA Architects, *Centretown Heritage Inventory*, 2020, 38.





1901 and 1912 Fire Insurance Plans showing early residential development in the area surrounding the subject property. *Ottawa Fire Insurance Plan*, 1888 rev. 1901 sheet 63 and *Ottawa Fire Insurance Plan* 1912, sheet 63.

#### **Criterion 8**

The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.

**Yes**

#### **Response to Criterion**

The Erskine Presbyterian Church has contextual value because it is historically and functionally linked to its surroundings. The growth of this area of Centretown in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries contributed to Bronson Avenue's development as a hub for 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century institutional and religious buildings. As a place of worship, the Erskine Presbyterian Church is historically and functionally linked to the institutional character of this area of Centretown.

#### **Supporting Details**

The Erskine Presbyterian Church has contextual value because it is historically and functionally linked to its surroundings. The church has significant frontage on the corner of Bronson Avenue—an early thoroughfare street at the west edge of Centretown.<sup>47</sup>

Constructed between 1901 and 1906, the subject property is historically connected to the period of early development in Centretown.<sup>48</sup> At the time of the subject property's construction, Bronson Avenue and Centretown was developing as a residential area. The area's early development as a residential area created a demand, and contributed

<sup>47</sup> ERA Architects, *Centretown Heritage Inventory*, 2020, 20.

<sup>48</sup> ERA Architects, "Appendix A, Map 11: Property Classifications," *Centretown Heritage Inventory*, 2020.

to the success, of religious, institutional, institutional, and civic, in this part of Centretown.

Today, as a core north-south street in Centretown, Bronson Avenue and its surrounding area, can be characterized by its mix of residential, commercial, and institutional building types.<sup>49</sup> Many institutional buildings are found on or near Centretown's stretch of Bronson Avenue, including the Bronson Centre (formerly Immaculata School), McPhail Memorial Baptist Church, the Saint-Vincent hospital, and Centennial Public School. As a place of worship, the Erskine Presbyterian Church is functionally linked to the institutional character of this area of Centretown.



The Bronson Centre, formerly Immaculata High School, on the northeast corner of Bronson Avenue and Lisgar Streets. *City of Ottawa*, 2016.

<sup>49</sup> ERA Architects, "Appendix A, Map 11: Property Classifications," *Centretown Heritage Inventory*, 2020.





The McPhail Memorial Baptist Church at the corner of Bronson Avenue and Lisgar Streets. *Google Maps*, 2022.



Saint-Vincent Hospital at 60 Cambridge Street North, constructed c. 1900. *Ottawa Citizen*, October 7, 2020.



Looking south on Bronson Avenue with various residential building's surrounding the church, *Google Maps, 2020.*



Looking north on Bronson Avenue with various residential building's surrounding the church, *Google Maps, 2020.*

<b>Criterion 9</b>	
The property has contextual value because it is a landmark	<b>Yes</b>



**Response to Criterion**

The Erskine Presbyterian Church is a landmark on Bronson Avenue and in west Centretown. The church has prominent frontage on Bronson Avenue, which makes it distinct on the streetscape. The church's tall spire is visible from side streets and parks throughout the west Centretown neighbourhood.

**Supporting Details**

The Erskine Presbyterian Church is a landmark on Bronson Avenue and in west Centretown. The church's tall spire is visible from side streets and parks throughout the west Centretown neighbourhood and on Bronson Avenue. The building also has prominent frontage on Bronson Avenue, taking up nearly the entire block between MacLaren and Gilmour Streets, making it distinct on the streetscape.



The Erskine Presbyterian Church's frontage on Bronson Avenue. *City of Ottawa, 2024.*



The spire of the Erskine Presbyterian Church visible from the surrounding residential neighbourhood. *Google Maps, 2022.*



Looking south on Bronson Avenue, the spire of the Erskine Presbyterian Church is visible from the McPhail Memorial Baptist Church, *Google Maps, 2020.*

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