

**Subject:      Designation of the Ottawa Mosque, 251 Northwestern Avenue under  
Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act**

**File Number: ACS2025-PDB-RHU-0006**

**Report to Built Heritage Committee on 13 May 2025  
and Council 28 May 2025**

**Submitted on May 2, 2025 by Court Curry, Manager, Right of Way, Heritage, and  
Urban Design Services, Planning, Development and Building Services**

**Contact Person: Greg MacPherson, Heritage Planner II, Heritage Planning Branch  
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**Ward: Kitchissippi (15)**

**Objet :      Désignation de la mosquée d'Ottawa, située au 251, avenue  
Northwestern en vertu de la partie IV de la *Loi sur le patrimoine de  
l'Ontario***

**Dossier : ACS2025-PDB-RHU-0006**

**Rapport au Comité du patrimoine bâti**

**le 13 mai 2025**

**et au Conseil le 28 mai 2025**

**Soumis le 2 mai 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 II, Planification  
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**Quartier : Kitchissippi (15)**

## REPORT RECOMMENDATION

**That the Built Heritage Committee recommend that Council issue a Notice of Intention to Designate the Ottawa Mosque, 251 Northwestern 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 de publier un avis d'intention de désigner la mosquée d'Ottawa située au 251, avenue Northwestern en vertu de la partie IV de la *Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario*, conformément à la Déclaration de la valeur sur le plan du 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 Ottawa Mosque, 251 Northwestern Avenue is a two-storey, brown brick clad, irregular-shaped mosque with a dome and minaret with Modernist architectural influences. The building was constructed between 1973 and 1979 with an addition in 1996 and is located on the east side of Northwestern Avenue north of Scott Street in Champlain Park, Ottawa. It has cultural value for its design, associative, and contextual values and meets five of the nine criteria for designation under Part IV of the OHA.

## 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)

Section 4.6 of the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) includes the following policy regarding the conservation of cultural 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 set out above, direct the designation of significant properties and comply with this policy.

Should City Council designate the subject property it would be considered a "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 251 Northwestern Avenue meets five of the nine 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:**

251 Northwestern Avenue has design value as the earliest purpose-built mosque built in Ottawa, constructed between 1974 and 1979, and one of the earliest in Ontario after the London Muslim Mosque whose current building was constructed in 1964. Additionally, 251 Northwestern Avenue is a unique and rare expression of a Modernist place of worship as the only Modernist mosque in Ottawa. The building is characteristic of the Modernist style with its simple form and use of contemporary construction materials. Finally, 251 Northwestern Avenue has design value as a representative example of a modernist mosque with traditional Islamic architecture features including its characteristic dome, minaret, and prayer hall with a square plan.

**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:**

251 Northwestern Avenue has historical and associative value because it has direct associations with the Ottawa Muslim Association. The OMA is a grassroots organization that was founded in 1962 to serve the Muslim community in the National Capital Region. One of their early goals was to open a purpose-built mosque, which they accomplished with the construction of the Ottawa Mosque, at 251 Northwestern Avenue, finished in 1979. The OMA operates the Ottawa Mosque and its religious services, in addition to a library, educational programming, and social services.

**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:**

251 Northwestern Avenue has associative value because it yields and has the potential to yield further information about Ottawa's early and contemporary Muslim community.

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

251 Northwestern Avenue has contextual value because it is functionally linked to its surroundings. The property was strategically selected as the location for the Ottawa Mosque because of its central location adjacent to the community's former meeting space, and its proximity to workplaces and public transit.

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

251 Northwestern Avenue has contextual value as a landmark due to its prominent location north of Scott Street and the high visibility of its iconic architectural features including the minaret and dome.

### **Conclusion**

The property at 251 Northwestern Avenue meets five of the nine 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 impediments to approving the recommendation in this report.

### **COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR**

The Ward Councillor is aware of and supportive of the proposed designation.

### **CONSULTATION**

Heritage staff met with representatives of the Ottawa Muslim Association in November 2024 to tour the site and discuss the property's potential for designation.

Representatives of the Ottawa Muslim Association shared additional resources and reviewed the Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report and Statement of Cultural Heritage Value. Details of the Built Heritage Committee meeting were shared via email and a mailed letter dated February 25, 2025.

### **ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS**

The designation of the subject property will not result in any additional accessibility impacts.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no risk implications.

### **RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no rural implications.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

Document 1 Location Map

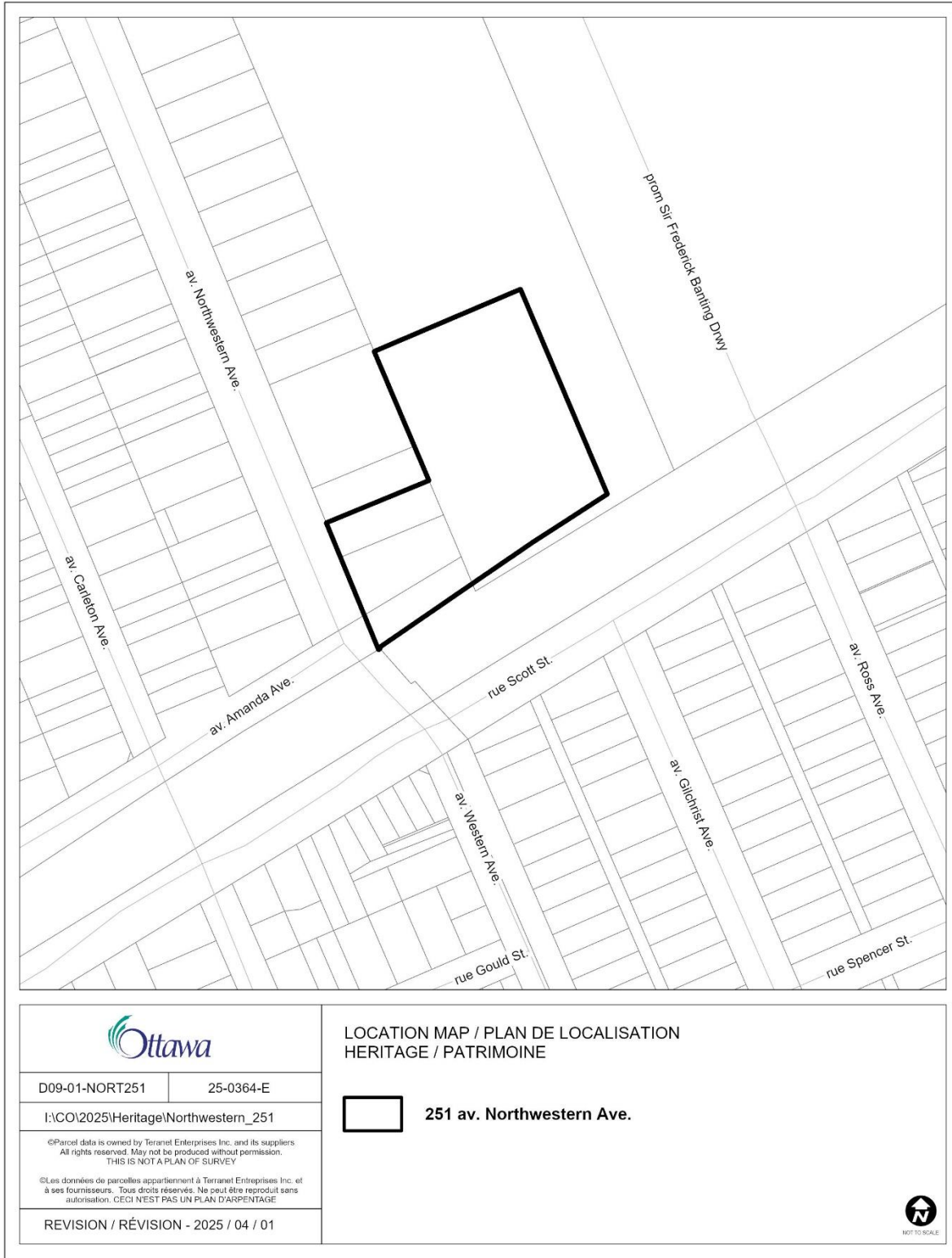
Document 2 Photos

Document 3 Ontario Regulation 9/06

Document 4 Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Document 5 Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report

## Document 1 Location Map



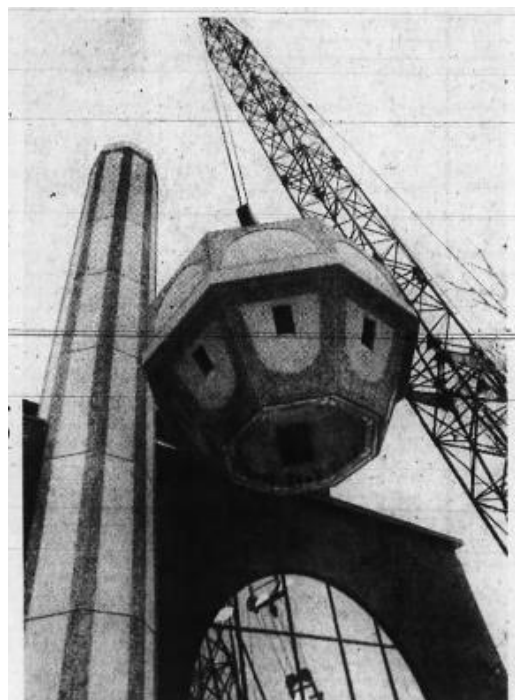
## Document 2 Photos



251 Northwestern Avenue, Source: City of Ottawa, 2024



"Topping it off," Source: *The Ottawa Citizen*. January 31, 1975, 5.



"City mosque completed," Source: *The Ottawa Journal*. February 23, 1979, 3.



## **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 Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report**

### **Ontario Regulation 9/06 Assessment**

Address: 251 Northwestern Avenue

Date: October 2024

Prepared by: Heritage Staff

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251 Northwestern Avenue, Source: City of Ottawa, 2024

### **Executive Summary**

251 Northwestern Avenue is a two-storey irregularly shaped brown brick clad building with a dome and minaret located in Champlain Park, Ottawa. 251 Northwestern Avenue has design value as the earliest mosque in Ottawa, in a unique and rare expression of a Modernist place of worship, with traditional Islamic architectural features. The building has cultural heritage value because of its association with the Ottawa Muslim Association, who constructed it between 1973 and 1979 and an addition in 1996. 251 Northwestern Avenue was purpose-built and has operated as a mosque complex along with religious and educational spaces since its opening. As the first mosque in Ottawa, the building has the potential to yield more information about Ottawa's early and contemporary Muslim community. 251 Northwestern Avenue is contextually linked to its surroundings as its location was strategically selected. Finally, the building has contextual value as a landmark in Ottawa with its imposing and highly visible minaret and dome.

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

## Introduction

251 Northwestern Avenue is located on the east side of Northwestern Avenue north of Scott Street in Champlain Park, Ottawa.

<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>  251 Northwestern Avenue has design value as the earliest mosque built in Ottawa and one of the earliest in Ontario, constructed between 1973 and 1979. Additionally, 251 Northwestern Avenue is a unique and rare expression of a Modernist place of worship as the only Modernist mosque in Ottawa. The building is characteristic of the Modernist style with its simple form and use of contemporary construction materials. Finally, 251 Northwestern Avenue has design value as a representative example of a contemporary mosque with traditional Islamic architecture features including its characteristic dome, minaret, and prayer hall with a square plan.	

### Supporting Details – Criterion 1

#### Architectural Analysis and Overview



251 Northwestern Avenue, west façade,  
Source: City of Ottawa, 2024



251 Northwestern Avenue,  
southwest corner, Source: City of

251 Northwestern Avenue was constructed between 1973 and 1979 and was purpose built as a mosque with associated community spaces and offices. It is a two-storey brown brick clad building and a stucco foundation. The building has large semi-circular and circular windows on multiple façades with brick voussoirs. On the northwest corner

is the main entrance with a wide staircase. The west façade features an Arabic inscription on a metal band across the central circular window. The main prayer hall is square shaped with a central dome 20 feet in diameter, constructed with wood framing and a copper exterior, topped with a circular finial, and semi-circular windows sit below the dome with an angled copper roof. The north and south ends also have angled copper roofs. Near the centre of the complex and at the southwest corner of the prayer hall sits a 115-foot minaret, also topped with a circular finial.

### Architectural Style Description & Canadian Context

#### *Modernism*

Modernism was the most significant architecture style of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and its use was widespread around the world. It emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and was popularized in Europe, North America, and specifically in Ontario between the 1930s and 1960s.<sup>1</sup> The movement was a response to earlier eclectic styles with historical references and focuses on the idea of progress.<sup>2</sup> Modernist architects were driven by the philosophy that the “form follows function” which emerged due to the need to design buildings that hadn’t been created before in the modern era.<sup>3</sup> This resulted in the rejection of ornamentation in favour of highly functional, rational, and structurally innovative designs.<sup>4</sup> This translated to the use of the latest materials including thin or reinforced concrete, steel frames, and more use of glass.<sup>5</sup> Modernism was used for a range of applications from residential, commercial, to places of worship.

#### *Islamic Mosques*

Islam was promulgated in the early 7<sup>th</sup> century by Muhammad, who was sent a series of prophecies by God, which became the Quran, Islam’s holy book.<sup>6</sup> Muhammad and his followers fled to Medina, where he constructed a house with an open courtyard and one wall that pointed towards Mecca (*qibla*) and the Ka’ba, the most sacred mosque in Islam.<sup>7</sup> The Prophet’s house is connected to the foundation of the religion as well as the definition of essential features of the mosque (*masjid*), which was the *umma*’s (Muslim community) central place of worship.<sup>8</sup> The mosque is directly tied to two of the pillars of

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<sup>1</sup> Katherine McLaughlin, “Modern Architecture: Everything You Need to Know,” Architectural Digest, July 26, 2023, accessed August 20, 2024, <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/modern-architecture-101>.

<sup>2</sup> William J. R. Curtis, *Modern Architecture Since 1900* (Phaidon, 1996), 11.

<sup>3</sup> McLaughlin, “Modern Architecture: Everything You Need to Know.”

<sup>4</sup> “Modernism,” Royal Institute of British Architects, accessed August 20, 2024, <https://www.architecture.com/explore-architecture/modernism>

<sup>5</sup> McLaughlin, “Modern Architecture: Everything You Need to Know.”

<sup>6</sup> Jon Cannon, *The Secret Languages of Sacred Spaces: Decoding Churches, Temples, Mosques and Other Places of Worship Around the World* (Duncan Baird Publishers, 2013), 136.

<sup>7</sup> Cannon, *The Secret Languages of Sacred Spaces*, 136.

<sup>8</sup> Cannon, *The Secret Languages of Sacred Spaces*, 136-137.

Islam including Shahada, the act of daily prayer as a declaration of faith to the one God, Allah, and Prophet Muhammad, the last messenger of God, and Salah which requires prayer to be conducted five times daily.<sup>9</sup> The other pillars of Islam include Sawm, which involves fasting during Ramadan, Hajj, a pilgrimage to Mecca, and Zakat, regularly donating a portion of your wealth to those in need.<sup>10</sup>

The Ottoman mosque was well established by the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century and its basic elements included:<sup>11</sup>

- Demarcated space for the congregation to pray with a covered prayer-hall (*haram*) considered the heart of the mosque,<sup>12</sup> with a courtyard (*sahn*) surrounded by colonnades or arcades (*riwaqs*)
  - Prayer-hall has a rectangular or square plan
    - Hypostyle roof; or
    - One large dome with pendentives; or
    - One or several small domes
- *Qibla*, a wall perpendicular to the direction towards Mecca which indicates the direction the *umma* should pray, parallel to it; with a *mihrab*, a central recess in the form of a Roman niche (semicircular plan with a semicircular arch)
- *Minbar*, a pulpit with stairs, a platform where the imam led prayer from so their voice projected and they stood one step from the top as the platform was emblematically for the Prophet, and frequently with a cupola style roof, was placed to the right of the *mihrab*
- *Dikka*, a single storey wood platform or tribune on the same axis as the *mihrab* to communicate the Imam's prayer to large congregations
- *Kursi*, the lectern where the Qur'an is placed, located beside the *dikka*
- *Maqsura*, a place to safeguard the Imam
- Pool, with or without a fountain, used for ablutions prior to prayers or for decorative purposes
- Minaret, a tower used by the muezzin for *adhan* (the daily call to prayer) that became a universal feature from the 14<sup>th</sup> century onwards, could have multiple
  - also served as a landmark so the building was highly identifiable
    - usually present but are not essential on contemporary mosques as they may be more symbolic with modern sound systems
- Portal, the threshold between the outside world and the inside of the mosque, often elaborately decorated to demonstrate the patron's wealth and power, which was in contrast with the typically plain and simple exterior (besides the dome and

<sup>9</sup> "Five Pillars of Islam," Islamic Relief, last modified March 8, 2023, <https://www.islamic-relief.org.uk/resources/knowledge-base/five-pillars-of-islam/>.

<sup>10</sup> "Five Pillars of Islam."

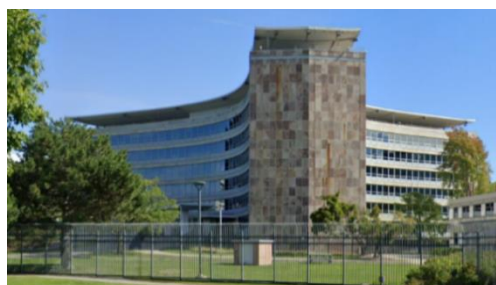
<sup>11</sup> David Macaulay, *Mosque* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003), 7; Martin Frishman, "Islam And The Form Of The Mosque," in *The Mosque* (Thames & Hudson Ltd., 1994), 33-41.

<sup>12</sup> Macaulay, *Mosque*, 10.



minaret), located opposite the *mihrab*

In Islamic architecture, generally the focus is on the interior and their function compared to the exterior, and common forms are used on a variety of building types and are not dependent on the building's function.<sup>13</sup> For example, domes are featured on mosques, madrasas, and tombs.<sup>14</sup> Building complexes in Islamic architecture often adhere to a principle of organic growth, where additions and alterations are not constrained by a singular plan or vision for the site, in contrast to Western architectural norms.<sup>15</sup> Islam believes God is beyond representation which led to most Islamic decoration drawing inspiration from calligraphy, geometry, and the natural world.<sup>16</sup> This stemmed from the importance of the Qur'an and the written word of God (Allah), which turned Quranic calligraphy into "Islam's chief art form."<sup>17</sup> The use of abstract vegetal representations and geometric patterns came to represent "order and beauty of creation."<sup>18</sup> The use of light was also important functionally and figuratively as it represented the light of God.<sup>19</sup> With the spread of Islam followed the regionalization of Islamic architecture from the Mediterranean, Middle East, Africa, to Asia and Southeast Asia historically, to contemporary mosques around the world today.



1500 Bronson Avenue, northwest corner,  
Source: Google Streetview, 2019

### Architectural Style Locally

*Modernism in  
Ottawa*

Ottawa  
features  
numerous



111 Sussex Drive, northeast corner,  
Source: Google Streetview, 2019

Modernist buildings including the former City Hall at 111 Sussex Drive (1958),<sup>20</sup> Ottawa Train Station at 200 Tremblay Road (1966),<sup>21</sup> former CBC Building at 1500 Bronson

<sup>13</sup> Ernst J. Grube, "Introduction: What is Islamic Architecture," in *Architecture of the Islamic World*, ed. George Michell, (Thames and Hudson, 1995), 10, 13.

<sup>14</sup> James Dickie (Yaqub Zaki), "1 Allah and Eternity: Mosques, Madrasas and Tombs," in *Architecture of the Islamic World*, 15.

<sup>15</sup> Dickie, "1 Allah and Eternity: Mosques, Madrasas and Tombs," 13.

<sup>16</sup> Macaulay, *Mosque*, 68.

<sup>17</sup> Cannon, *The Secret Languages of Sacred Spaces*, 141.

<sup>18</sup> Cannon, *The Secret Languages of Sacred Spaces*, 144.

<sup>19</sup> Hasan şahan Arel and Merve Öner, "Use of daylight in mosques: Meaning and practice in three different cases," *International Journal of Heritage Architecture Studies Repairs and Maintenance* 1, no. 3 (2017): 421-429, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325724122\\_Use\\_of\\_daylight\\_in\\_mosques\\_Meaning\\_and\\_practice\\_in\\_three\\_different\\_cases](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325724122_Use_of_daylight_in_mosques_Meaning_and_practice_in_three_different_cases).

<sup>20</sup> "Former Ottawa City Hall," Parks Canada Directory of Federal Heritage Designations, accessed August 26, 2024, [https://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page\\_fhbrog\\_eng.aspx?id=9418&i=64678](https://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_fhbrog_eng.aspx?id=9418&i=64678).

<sup>21</sup> "Prix du XXe siècle — 2011 Recipient," Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, accessed August 22, 2024, <https://raic.org/raic/prix-du-xxe-si%C3%A8cle-%E2%80%94-2011-recipient-2>.



Avenue (1961-64),<sup>22</sup> and Hart Massey House, 400 Lansdowne Road (1959).<sup>23</sup> These examples demonstrate the widespread use of the style during its popularity in Ottawa from the 1950s to 1970s, and its use for many building types.

Modernist places of worship are common in Ontario, and especially for new additions.<sup>24</sup> In Ottawa, a Modernist place of is Bells Corners

United Church at 3955 Old Richmond Road constructed in 1962.<sup>25</sup> It has simplified and contemporary interpretations of traditional features such as the steeple, uses modern materials and forms, such as large, oversized windows with metal frames.



400 Lansdowne Road, Source: Google Street View, 2014



Bells Corners United Church, Source: Ontario Heritage Trust, Places of Worship Database



Windsor Mosque, Source: <https://windsorislamicassociation.com/our-history>

### Modernist Mosques in Ontario

There are four Modernist mosques listed on the Ontario Heritage Trust's places of worship inventory: Ottawa Mosque; Bai't-Un-Nur in Hamilton (unknown construction date); Masjid Al-Salaam in Peterborough (circa 1960), and Windsor Mosque in Windsor.<sup>26</sup> The Windsor Mosque has a similar history to the Ottawa Mosque in that their Muslim association established in the mid 1950s, in the early 1960s they worshipped in a home, and their first purpose built mosque was constructed in 1969, and between 1991-93, the northern addition was added.<sup>27</sup> The 1969 building is brick clad, rectangular shaped, has arched windows, and a portal.

The Kawartha Muslim Religious Association was founded in 1991 therefore indicating

<sup>22</sup> "CBC Building," Canada's Historic Places, accessed August 26, 2024, <https://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=1865>.

<sup>23</sup> "Hart Massey House National Historic Site of Canada," Parks Canada Directory of Federal Heritage Designations, accessed August 26, 2024, [https://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page\\_nhs\\_eng.aspx?id=15532](https://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=15532).

<sup>24</sup> "Modern," Ontario Heritage Trust, accessed August 22, 2024, <https://www.heritagetrust.on.ca/places-of-worship/places-of-worship-database/architecture/architectural-style?id=38>.

<sup>25</sup> "Our Story," Bells Corners United Church, accessed August 22, 2024, <https://www.bcuc.org/our-story>.

<sup>26</sup> "Places of Worship Inventory," Ontario Heritage Trust, accessed August 27, 2024, <https://www.heritagetrust.on.ca/places-of-worship/places-of-worship-database/advanced-search>.

<sup>27</sup> "Our History," Windsor Islam Association, accessed August 27, 2024, <https://windsorislamicassociation.com/our-history>.

the Masjid Al-Salaam's building was acquired decades about the building was constructed.<sup>28</sup> Given the Modernist design without traditional Islamic architectural influences, it is also suggested Bai't-Un-Nur's building also was repurposed. Like in many large Canadian cities, most of Ottawa's mosques were built in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards, and many rented and/or repurposed existing buildings. Being Ottawa's first mosque, 251 Northwestern Avenue is a unique and rare example of a Modernist place of worship as a mosque in Ontario and with traditional features, as well as one of the earliest mosques purpose-built in Canada.

### Relation of the Building to the Style

#### *Modernism*

The mosque's architect, G. A. Asad in 1972 described the building as, "it will not be a major mosque, but it maintains tradition and function,"<sup>29</sup> in line with the defining tenets of Modernism, of form following function. The use of the building and the specific rooms were carefully considered when designing the original and the 1996 southern addition. The building was designed using contemporary materials and techniques such as pre-cast reinforced concrete to construct the 115-foot minaret, and large semi-circular and circular windows in metal frames.



Bai't-Un-Nur, Source: Ontario Heritage Trust, Places of Worship Database



Masjid Al-Salaam, Source: Ontario Heritage Trust, Places of Worship Database

<sup>28</sup> "About Us," Kawartha Muslim Religious Association, accessed August 27, 2024, <https://www.kmarapeterborough.org/about>.

<sup>29</sup> "City will hear call to Allah," *The Ottawa Journal*, June 2, 1972, accessed August 13, 2024, <https://newspapers.com/image/46259411/>.



Artist's Concept 1972, Source:  
 "Special Issue: Ottawa Mosque 20<sup>th</sup>  
 Anniversary," *The Canadian Muslim*,  
 ed. Mahmood Rasheed and Fazal  
 Siddiqui. 15. no. 1 (March 1997).

### *Islamic Architecture*

251 Northwestern Avenue features many traditional Islamic architectural features of a mosque including its:

- Prayer hall with a square plan
- large dome with arched windows below to allow light in but also operate as a ventilation and cooling system
- *qibla* and *mihrab* with a semicircular arch and two arched windows
- wood *minbar* (donated by Egypt)<sup>30</sup>
- tall *minaret* with a platform, helm roof, modern speaker system, and a circular finial likely representing a stylized moon. Some believe the moon, specifically the crescent moon, was a symbol associated with the Ottoman Empire then by extension Islam.<sup>31</sup> Whereas others believe the stylized moon is associated with the religious importance of the moon and the lunar Islamic calendar, which signals religious observances including Ramadan and Eid, and prayer times, therefore being associated with a place of worship.<sup>32</sup>
- Arabic calligraphy on the exterior west façade reading:
  - "The mosques of Allah should only be maintained by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day"
  - "In the name of God, the most Gracious, most Merciful"

<sup>30</sup> Ottawa Muslim Association, "Open Doors Ottawa 2021 – Ottawa Mosque," YouTube, April 18, 2021, accessed August 21, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=97bymLdToEk>.

<sup>31</sup> Huda, "A History of the Crescent Moon in Islam," Learn Religions, date modified August 24, 2024, <https://www.learnreligions.com/the-crescent-moon-a-symbol-of-islam-2004351>.

<sup>32</sup> "What does the circular (sometimes crescent-like) symbol on top of Islamic Minarets and Domes represent?," Stack Exchange, last modified October 8, 2020, <https://islam.stackexchange.com/questions/45276/what-does-the-circular-sometimes-crescent-like-symbol-on-top-of-islamic-minare>.

- "Allah Almighty speaks the truth"
- 1996 southern addition (which enclosed the *minaret*) satisfies the concept that buildings could be expanded to serve its function



Photograph before the 1996 south façade addition, Source: "Special Issue: Ottawa Mosque 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary," *The Canadian Muslim*, ed. Mahmood Rasheed and Fazal Siddiqui, 15, no. 1 (March 1997).



Photograph after the 1996 south façade addition, Source: "Special Issue: Ottawa Mosque 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary," *The Canadian Muslim*, ed. Mahmood Rasheed and Fazal Siddiqui, 15, no. 1 (March 1997).

Therefore 251 Northwestern Avenue represents and is a unique expression of both a late application of the Modernist style combined with traditional Islamic architectural features.

<b>Criterion 2</b>	
The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.	<b>No</b>
<b>Response to Criterion</b> Heritage staff have reviewed primary sources including architectural drawings for the subject building, compared the building to others of similar age or typology, and consulted relevant secondary sources including architectural history books. Staff's review concluded that due the building's vernacular Modernist design with its brick cladding, squared shaped footprint, geometric curved glass windows, and minimal exterior ornamentation, the property does not display a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.	

<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 reviewed primary sources including fire architectural drawings for the	



subject building, compared the building to others of similar age or typology, and consulted relevant secondary sources including architectural history books. Staff's review concluded that the construction method for 251 Northwestern Avenue is typical of the building's construction era and type. This includes the use of pre-cast reinforced concrete to construct the minaret<sup>33</sup> and a wooden dome with laminated wood supports covered in cooper.<sup>34</sup> Arguably the construction of a 115-foot minaret with a 20-ton platform and a 15-ton dome with a 20 foot radius<sup>35</sup> is impressive, however given the building's construction in the late 1970s, it does not demonstrate a high degree of technical or scientific achievement for its time.

#### **Criterion 4**

The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.

**Yes**

#### **Response to Criterion**

251 Northwestern Avenue has historical and associative value because it has direct associations with the Ottawa Muslim Association. The OMA is a grassroots organization that was founded in 1962 to serve the Muslim community in the National Capital Region. One of their early goals was to open a purpose-built mosque, which they accomplished with the construction of the Ottawa Mosque, at 251 Northwestern Avenue, finished in 1979. The OMA operates the Ottawa Mosque and its religious services, in addition to a library, educational programming, and social services.

#### **Supporting Details – Criterion 4**

Before the Ottawa Muslim Association (OMA) was established, Muslims in Ottawa would pray in community members' homes or rent spaces in local churches. When the OMA was established in 1962, the primary aim of the group was to build a local mosque to provide Muslims with "a place of worship, organize children's classes, and spread information about the faith."<sup>36</sup> In 1962, a committee quickly organized communal prayer for the first time, and local Muslims worshipped weekly at the Western United Church located on Wellington Street west of Bronson Avenue.<sup>37</sup> The building was demolished the following year and in January 1964, the United congregation's new church opened

<sup>33</sup> "City mosque completed," *The Ottawa Journal*, February 23, 1979, accessed August 15, 2024, <https://newspapers.com/image/48678294/>.

<sup>34</sup> "City will hear call to Allah."

<sup>35</sup> "Topping it off," *The Ottawa Citizen*, January 31, 1975, accessed August 15, 2024, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/460191063/>.

<sup>36</sup> "Moslem Group Plans To Have Ottawa Mosque," *The Ottawa Citizen*, April 5, 1962, accessed August 14, 2024, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/457121872/>.

<sup>37</sup> "Muslims have bond in Islam," *The Ottawa Journal*, September 16, 1978, accessed August 19, 2024, <https://newspapers.com/image/48824361/>.

at 241 Northwestern Avenue and was renamed the Northwestern United Church.<sup>38</sup> For three additional years, Ottawa area Muslims continued to pray in the basement of Northwestern United Church.

During its formative years, the OMA, its Women's Auxiliary, and its members hosted fundraising events to raise money for the construction of a mosque. This included their annual dinner, bake sales, rummage sales, and film screenings.<sup>39</sup> The OMA also did extensive outreach to Muslim countries and many made large monetary donations including Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi, Libya, Qatar, Kuwait, Iraq, Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan, United Arab Emirates, Tunisia, Oman, and Egypt.<sup>40</sup> Additionally, the OMA received donations in kind including carpets and other furnishings for the main prayer hall from Iran, Turkey, and Morocco, and specifically the chandelier which still hangs in the prayer hall was gifted by Pakistan.<sup>41</sup>

In 1966, the OMA was incorporated and registered.<sup>42</sup> The following year, the OMA purchased the half-acre lot at the corner of Northwestern Avenue and Scott Street, south of Northwestern United Church for \$25,000, which included two old houses.<sup>43</sup> The northern house was used as a prayer space, while the southern house was rented to tenants to help fund the mosque's construction. The OMA hired Pakistani architect Ghazi Anwar Asad to design their mosque, and in 1971, the community approved the designs.<sup>44</sup> Permits were issued in 1973, construction began in September 1973, and by 1975 the basement opened for partial occupancy.<sup>45</sup> The first prayer was held on March 26, 1975,<sup>46</sup> the main prayer hall opened on March 2, 1977 on the Prophet Muhammed's birthday,<sup>47</sup> and in February 1979, the final sections of the minaret were installed

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<sup>38</sup> Dave Allston, "A farewell to Northwestern United Church," The Kitchissippi Museum, April 26, 2016, accessed August 19, 2024, <https://kitchissippimuseum.blogspot.com/2016/04/a-farewell-to-northwestern-united-church.html>.

<sup>39</sup> "In Ottawa," *The Ottawa Journal*, November 30, 1973, accessed August 20, 2024, <https://newspapers.com/image/43598207/>; "This Week and Next," *The Ottawa Journal*, May 13, 1966, accessed August 20, 2024, <https://newspapers.com/image/44456870/>; "In Ottawa," *The Ottawa Journal*, December 31, 1971, accessed August 20, 2024, <https://newspapers.com/image/46063465/>; "Noticeboard: Tomorrow," *The Ottawa Citizen*, September 21, 1979, accessed August 20, 2024, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/461648821/>.

<sup>40</sup> "The Ottawa Mosque Progress Report on Construction," by the Ottawa Muslim Association, February 25, 1976, MG740-2-82 ½, A2015-0219, 2015.0110.1, OMA Admin, External Relations Committee, 1974-77, Farid R. Ahmed fonds, City of Ottawa Archives, Ottawa, ON.

<sup>41</sup> "The Ottawa Mosque Progress Report on Construction," February 25, 1976; Ottawa Muslim Association, "Open Doors Ottawa 2021 – Ottawa Mosque."

<sup>42</sup> "The Ottawa Mosque Progress Report on Construction," February 25, 1976.

<sup>43</sup> Allston, "A farewell to Northwestern United Church."

<sup>44</sup> "The Ottawa Mosque Progress Report on Construction," February 25, 1976.

<sup>45</sup> "251 Northwestern," MAP 4.0; "Muslim pioneers build a future," *The Ottawa Journal*, May 17, 1975, accessed August 14, 2024, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/48539622/>; "The Ottawa Mosque Progress Report on Construction," February 25, 1976.

<sup>46</sup> "The Ottawa Mosque Progress Report on Construction,"; Correspondence, MG740-1-3, A2015-0221, 2015.0072.1, Mosque Extension and construction background, 1982-1991, City of Ottawa Archives, ON.

<sup>47</sup> The Ottawa Muslim Association, "Phase Two of the Ottawa Mosque," MG740-1-3, A2015-0221, 2015.0072.1, Mosque Extension and construction background, 1982-1991, City of Ottawa Archives, ON.

completing the project.<sup>48</sup> Being the first and serving the largest congregation, 251 Northwestern Avenue is also known as the Ottawa Main Mosque or the Main Mosque.

In addition to funding, constructing, and maintaining the mosque, the OMA also maintains the on-site library, offers a range of services including counseling, educational programming related to Islamic and Qur'anic studies, hosting events including weddings and funerals, and manages Zakat.<sup>49</sup> During the COVID-19 pandemic, the OMA continued to offer programs and services online to meet their community's needs.<sup>50</sup> Since its inception to today, the OMA and 251 Northwestern Avenue has been a central and essential community hub for Muslims of the Greater Ottawa Region. Because of this, the building has also been referred to as the Main Mosque or the Mother Mosque.

<b>Criterion 5</b>	
251 Northwestern Avenue has associative value because it yields and has the potential to yield further information about Ottawa's early and contemporary Muslim community.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Response to Criterion</b>  251 Northwestern Avenue has associative value because it yields and has the potential to yield more information about the understanding of the early Muslim community in Ottawa from the later half of the 20th century onwards.	

### **Supporting Details – Criterion 5**

Before the Second World War, most immigrants to Canada came from Christian-majority countries. Following the war, some discriminatory immigration policies were lifted, facilitating immigration from a wider range of countries and leading to the slow establishment of a more multi-cultural religious scene across the country.<sup>51</sup> Thousands of Muslims immigrated to Canada's major cities, including Ottawa, in the following decades.<sup>52</sup>

In the 1950s, it is estimated 100 Muslims were living in the Ottawa region.<sup>53</sup> There was not yet any official organized communities or places of worship with the exception of biannual events at the Egyptian and Pakistani embassies for two official holidays,

<sup>48</sup> "City mosque completed."

<sup>49</sup> "Services," Ottawa Muslim Association, accessed August 20, 2024, <https://ottawamosque.ca/>.

<sup>50</sup> Mohammed Aswad, "Secretary's Report: OMA General Body Meeting 2021," Ontario Muslim Association, May 2021, accessed August 20, 2024, [https://ottawamosque.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Secretary\\_s-Report.pdf](https://ottawamosque.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Secretary_s-Report.pdf).

<sup>51</sup> Robert Choquette, *Canada's Religions: An Historical Introduction* (University of Ottawa Press, 2004), 378.

<sup>52</sup> Choquette, *Canada's Religions: An Historical Introduction*, 377.

<sup>53</sup> "It's part of our religious obligation," *The Ottawa Citizen*, February 21, 2024, accessed August 14, 2024, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/466895362/>.

Eed-ul-Fitr and Eed-ul-Azha.<sup>54</sup> By the early 1960s, there were between 500 and 1000 Muslims residing in the National Capital Region, and a local Muslim community was emerging.<sup>55</sup> In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was significant growth in the Islamic community in Ottawa.<sup>56</sup>

Early community members such as Mohamed Ghadban described that it wasn't easy growing up in Ottawa as a Muslim.<sup>57</sup> He recalled attending Catholic Sunday School until his father decided to remove his children from the program as they were Muslim and prayed on Friday. After missing three classes, a teacher brought a truant police officer to their home. Anecdotes from early community members have the potential to yield more information about what it was like for Muslims living in the National Capital Region during the community's and the OMA's formative years.

The OMA from its inception to today is welcoming of Muslims of all ethnicities. The Ottawa Mosque brought together Ottawa Muslims "without reference to their nationality."<sup>58</sup> Four of the founding executives of the OMA were Arab Lebanese, who constituted the largest group of Muslims in Ottawa and at the Ottawa Mosque, followed by Pakistanis.<sup>59</sup> The Ottawa Mosque was also home to Muslims from India, Bengal, and Indonesia, among other nationalities.<sup>60</sup>

It should also be noted that the OMA library is a resource available to Muslims and non-Muslims alike to learn more about Islam and the dissemination of literature and knowledge. The library in 1982 had over 4,000 resources including Islamic books, journals, magazine, audio-visual material, as well as a Resource Centre.<sup>61</sup> The OMA library in and of itself, contributes to the potential to yield more information about the Muslim community in Ottawa and at large.

Dr. Farid Ahmed, one of the OMA's founding members who was highly involved in the community, donated his personal collection pertaining to the OMA's administration to the City of Ottawa Archives, which also serves as a valuable public resource for those interesting in learning more about the history of the OMA.

### ***Criterion 6***

<sup>54</sup> "It's part of our religious obligation."

<sup>55</sup> "Moslem Group Plans To Have Ottawa Mosque;" "It's part of our religious obligation."

<sup>56</sup> See table in Appendix

<sup>57</sup> The Ottawa Mosque, "OMA Pioneers, Mohamed Ghadban," February 20, 2023, accessed August 20, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTTdZQbMqko>.

<sup>58</sup> "Muslim pioneers build a future."

<sup>59</sup> "Muslim pioneers build a future."

<sup>60</sup> "Muslim pioneers build a future."

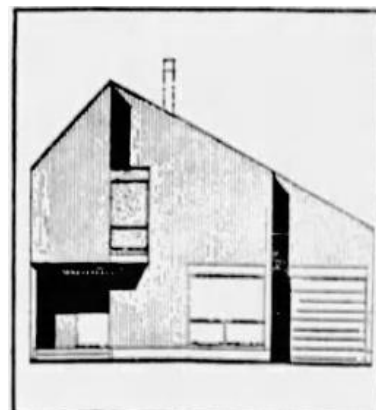
<sup>61</sup> The Ottawa Muslim Association, "Phase Two of the Ottawa Mosque."



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>No</b>
<p><b>Response to Criterion</b></p> <p>251 Northwestern Avenue was designed by Pakistani-Canadian architect Ghazi Anwar Asad. Few examples of Anwar Asad's work have been identified, and the Ottawa Mosque is the only known building in Ottawa of his design. Therefore, given the architect's limited body of work and lack of other local projects, staff have not identified this property as having associations with an architect who is significant to a community.</p>	

### **Supporting Details – Criterion 6**

Ghazi Asad immigrated to Canadian circa the mid 1960s, graduated from the University of Manitoba in 1966, and by 1968 was a member of the Ontario Association of Architects.<sup>62</sup> In 1969, the 45-year-old Asad was based in Toronto, and was one of five architects who won the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation competition for home designs.<sup>63</sup> Newspaper articles discuss the competition and included a photo of Asad's submission, which clearly has modernist architecture style influences with its irregular yet functional shape with an angled roofline which extends to the garage, simple façade, and recessed entrance.<sup>64</sup> Therefore Asad's design for this competition and the Ottawa Mosque would suggest that the Modernist style was essential to his aesthetic. However, without more works to compare it, it is difficult to determine how the Ottawa Mosque fits within Asad's body of work and his influence on architecture in Ontario and Canada.



Asad's architectural drawing, Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation competition, Source: The Ottawa Citizen, September 6, 1969, 17

<b>Criterion 7</b>	
The property has contextual value because it is important in defining,	<b>No</b>

<sup>62</sup> "7 Schools: 1966 Graduates," *Architecture Canada, The Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada*, volume 43, no. 9 (September 1966): 71, <https://dalspace.library.dal.ca/handle/10222/74795>; "9 Classified: Registrations," *Architecture Canada, The Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada*, volume 45, no. 10 (October 1968): 81, <https://dalspace.library.dal.ca/handle/10222/74820>.

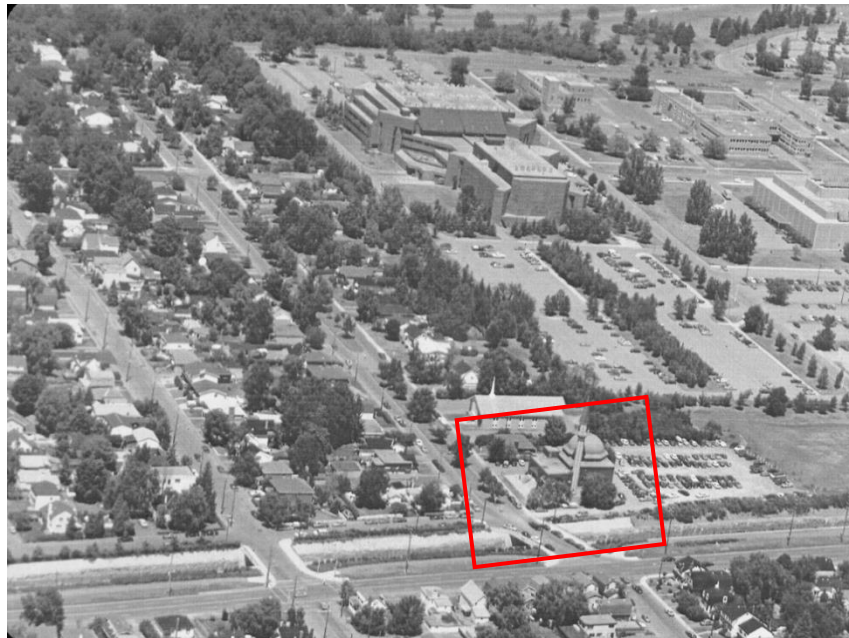
<sup>63</sup> "Two prize winning architects favour more condominiums," *The Ottawa Citizen*, September 6, 1969, accessed August 14, 2024, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/945943611/>.

<sup>64</sup> "Two prize winning architects favour more condominiums."

maintaining or supporting the character of an area.	
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### ***Response to Criterion***

251 Northwestern Avenue is located near the eastern boundary of the historic village of Riverside Park. The cottage community emerged in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and was a small police village until it was annexed in 1950 into the City of Ottawa and renamed Champlain Park.<sup>65</sup> By the late 1920s, the area remained a small community focused around Carleton Avenue.<sup>66</sup> The area was predominantly forested and open parkland used for recreational activities.<sup>67</sup> Champlain Park experienced a significant housing development after the Second World War, along with the expropriation of land on the north to accommodate the parkway and Tunney's Pasture on the east, resulting in few early cottages remaining.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, the character of Champlain Park is predominant post-Second World War residential buildings with contemporary residential infill. As 251 Northwestern Avenue was constructed by 1979, the building does not have contextual value in contributing to the character of the area.



OMA Mosque (red) Tunney's Pasture, 1994, Source: City of Ottawa Archives, CA028196

<sup>65</sup> Steve Cumbaa, "Home Sweet Home: Riverside Park, Nepean, Part One," *Champlain Speaker*, volume 16, no. 9 (April 1997): 1, <https://champlainpark.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/199704-champlain-speaker-v16n9.pdf>;

Steve Cumbaa, "Home Sweet Home: Riverside Park, Nepean, Part Two," *Champlain Speaker*, volume 16, no. 10, (May 1997): 1, <https://champlainpark.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/199705-champlain-speaker-v16n10.pdf>.

<sup>66</sup> GeoOttawa, 1928, <https://maps.ottawa.ca/geoottawa/>.

<sup>67</sup> Bob Grainger, "Champlain Park Used To Be Called Riverside Park," *Champlain Speaker*, volume 31, no. 1 (January 2011): 3, <https://champlainpark.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/201101-champlain-speaker-v31n1.pdf>.

<sup>68</sup> Cumbaa, "Home Sweet Home: Riverside Park, Nepean, Part Two."

<b>Criterion 8</b>	
The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Response to Criterion</b>  251 Northwestern Avenue has contextual value because it is functionally linked to its surroundings. The property was strategically selected as the location for the Ottawa Mosque because of its central location adjacent to the community's former meeting space, and its proximity to workplaces and public transit.	

### **Supporting Details – Criterion 8**

The site for Ottawa's first mosque was carefully considered at the time of purchase in 1967.<sup>69</sup> One of the founders of the OMA, Farid Ahmed, characterized early Muslim emigrants in Ottawa as generally fitting into two economic groups: those who were highly educated and held senior leadership positions in the federal government, and a second larger group who working in industrial and manufacturing positions, including many working at the nearby Seven-Up bottling plant located at 1314 Carling Avenue.<sup>70</sup> The site is highly accessible to the congregation because it is centrally located and in close proximity to Tunney's Pasture, a campus containing many federal government offices, in addition to other employment centres. At the time of construction, it was serviced by three bus routes and located off of Scott Street, a main east-west road in urban Ottawa.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, the mosque's location enabled it to serve Ottawa's growing Muslim community.



Aerial view of Champlain Park (west) and Tunny's Pasture (east), future site of Ottawa Mosque (red). Source: GeoOttawa. 1965

The physical location of the Ottawa Mosque at 251 Northwestern Avenue is also important to the building's and the *umma's* history. Beginning in 1962, an OMA committee received permission to rent the community hall every Sunday for prayers at

<sup>69</sup> "Muslim pioneers build a future."

<sup>70</sup> "It's part of our religious obligation,"; Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *The Carbonated Beverages Industry 1954 (Aerated Waters)*, K-10, [https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2018/statcan/32-208/CS32-208-1954-eng.pdf](https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2018/statcan/32-208/CS32-208-1954-eng.pdf).

<sup>71</sup> "Muslim pioneers build a future."

the Western United Church located at 545 Wellington Street (west of Bronson Avenue).<sup>72</sup> Ottawa Muslims worshipped here for two years until it was demolished and the United Church opened a new building, Northwestern United Church, at 241 Northwestern Avenue in January 1964.<sup>73</sup> The OMA followed the United congregation and continued to rent the basement for prayer at the Northwestern United Church until 1967 when they purchased the adjacent half-acre property.<sup>74</sup> The lot contained two buildings and the OMA used the northern house for prayer, and rented the southern house to tenants. Therefore, the location at 251 Northwestern Avenue was convenient to the community as they had been worshipping next door for several years.

Additionally, 251 Northwestern Avenue was considered a suitable site due to the few neighbours to the east and south of the lot.<sup>75</sup> This permitted the development of the mosque, in addition to land for potential expansions. The OMA might have considered the impact the call to prayer would have on the community, and with no residential development on the lots east and south, it was deemed as an appropriate location.

Therefore, it was likely a combination of the location being central and accessible to the Muslim community, the Islamic community worshipped in the area for several years, and how the corner lot was appropriate for their needs, why the OMA selected this location.

<b><i>Criterion 9</i></b>	
The property has contextual value because it is a landmark	<b>Yes</b>
<b><i>Response to Criterion</i></b>  251 Northwestern Avenue has contextual value as a landmark due to its prominent location north of Scott Street and the high visibility of its iconic architectural features including the minaret and dome.	

#### ***Supporting Details – Criterion 9***

<sup>72</sup> “Muslims have bond in Islam,”; Allston, “A farewell to Northwestern United Church.”

<sup>73</sup> Allston, “A farewell to Northwestern United Church.”

<sup>74</sup> Allston, “A farewell to Northwestern United Church.”

<sup>75</sup> “Muslim pioneers build a future.”



The Ottawa Mosque is considered a landmark due to its location and architectural features. The Ottawa Mosque is located one block north of Scott Street, a main throughfare in Ottawa. 251 Northwestern Avenue is situated immediately north of the Transitway, and with only the multiuse path between Scott Street and the mosque, the building is highly visible from Scott Street in both directions.



251 Northwestern Avenue, south façade and Transitway, Source: City of Ottawa, 2024.



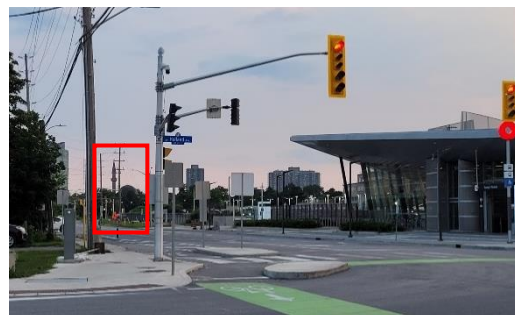
OMA Mosque, Scott Street, 1994, Source: City of Ottawa Archives, CA028197

The building's location between Island Parkway Drive and Tunney's Pasture, the latter being a transit hub connecting Ottawa's western and southern suburbs to the downtown core, would make not only Wellington West locals, but also daily commuters, familiar with the unique building on their regular transit route.

251 Northwestern Avenue is also considered a landmark due to its characteristic architectural features, its minaret and dome, which are highly identifiable in the distance. The traditional dome sits at 40 feet and its minaret reaches 115 feet in height, therefore its minaret in particular, can be seen throughout the Wellington West skyline.



Ottawa Muslim Association by Ghazi Anwar Asad, 1996, Source: Khalil Pirani, MIT Libraries, Aga Khan Visual Archive, <https://dome.mit.edu/handle/1721.3/53971>



Scott Street and Holland Avenue looking west, Ottawa Mosque in distance, Source: City of Ottawa. 2024.

<b><u>Appendix: Muslims Residing in Ottawa</u></b> <sup>76</sup>	
<u>Date</u>	<u>Population</u>
1950s	Apx. 100
Early 1960s	Apx. 500-1000
1973	Apx. 3,000
1975	Apx. 5,000
1981	16,585
1991	50,880
2001	41,725
2011	65,880
2021	114,780

### Sources

"7 Schools: 1966 Graduates." *Architecture Canada, The Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada*. Volume 43, No. 9 (September 1966).

<https://dalspace.library.dal.ca/handle/10222/74795>.

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## **Document 5 Statement of Cultural Heritage Value**

### **Statement of Cultural Heritage Value**

#### **Description of Property**

251 Northwestern Avenue is a two-storey, brown brick clad, irregular-shaped building with a dome and minaret with Modernist architectural influences. The building was constructed between 1973 and 1979 with an addition in 1996 and is located on the east side of Northwestern Avenue north of Scott Street in Champlain Park, Ottawa.

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

251 Northwestern Avenue has design value as the earliest mosque built in Ottawa and one of the earliest in Ontario, constructed between 1974 and 1979. Additionally, 251 Northwestern Avenue is a unique and rare expression of a Modernist place of worship as the only Modernist mosque in Ottawa. The building is characteristic of the Modernist style with its simple form and use of contemporary construction materials. Finally, 251 Northwestern Avenue has design value as a representative example of a contemporary mosque with traditional Islamic architecture features including its characteristic dome, minaret, and prayer hall with a square plan.

251 Northwestern Avenue has historical and associative value because it has direct associations with the Ottawa Muslim Association. The OMA is a grassroots organization that was founded in 1962 to serve the Muslim community in the National Capital Region. One of their early goals was to open a purpose-built mosque, which they accomplished with the construction of the Ottawa Mosque, at 251 Northwestern Avenue, finished in 1979. The OMA operates the Ottawa Mosque and its religious services, in addition to a library, educational programming, and social services.

251 Northwestern Avenue has associative value because it yields and has the potential to yield further information about Ottawa's early and contemporary Muslim community.

251 Northwestern Avenue has contextual value because it is functionally linked to its surroundings. The property was strategically selected as the location for the Ottawa Mosque because of its central location adjacent to the community's former meeting space, and its proximity to workplaces and public transit.

251 Northwestern Avenue has contextual value as a landmark due to its prominent location north of Scott Street and the high visibility of its iconic architectural features including the minaret and dome.

#### **Description of Heritage Attributes**

Key exterior attributes that contribute to the heritage value of 251 Northwestern Avenue as a unique expression of Modernist place of worship with traditional Islamic architectural features include:

- Two-storey irregular massing
- Brown brick cladding
- Large semi-circular and circular windows on multiple façades

- Metal band across the circular window on the west façade with an Arabic inscription
- Copper covered dome with semi-circular windows below, topped with a finial
- Octagonal minaret with semi-circular and arched motifs, projecting balcony, copper covered cone, topped with a finial

Key attributes that demonstrate 251 Northwestern Avenue's contextual value are:

- Its location immediately north of the Transitway, lending to its visibility along Scott Street and its landmark status

The interior of the building and any future additions or outbuildings are excluded in this designation.

## 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 251 Northwestern Avenue, several actions must be taken:

- 1) Heritage Planning Branch, Planning, Development and Building 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 251 Northwestern Avenue under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- 2) Heritage Planning Branch, Planning, Development and Building 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 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 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 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*.