

February 27, 2025

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Planner I
Heritage Planning Branch
Planning, Development and Building Services
City of Ottawa
110 Laurier Ave. W., 4th Floor

Subject: Comments on Draft Statement of Cultural Heritage (120 Holland Ave./1235 Wellington St. W)

Dear Sara,

Thank-you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Statement of Cultural Heritage Value. We take great pride in our building however given the seriousness of heritage designation, it's important to accurately characterize its architectural, historical and cultural features. Overall, we believe that the draft statement considerably overstates the cultural heritage of the building and contains factual errors in its description.

What follows is feedback from the board of directors of OCCC601, which is comprised entirely of residential and commercial owners (including Routeburn Urban Developments, the firm originally responsible for residential redevelopment of the building). Our ownership community has also been advised of the impending designation process.

Description of Property

- The City repeatedly uses 1235 Wellington St. W in the description of the building. The correct address is 120 Holland Ave. This is the address (including apartment number) on residential titles and which the City likely already uses to correspond with most residential owners. While some retail entrances face Wellington St. W., the main building entrance is actually off Holland Avenue.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

- Your reference to “purpose-built mixed-use” presumably applies to the combination of retail and office space in the original design, as the building was not intended for its current residential use. We note that mixed retail/office use, or retail/residential use, is not particularly notable and relatively typical of buildings along Wellington St. W. in this area.

- When originally conceived and built as a 2 storey structure, the building was an example of Art Moderne style. However after the addition of 3 more storeys and a prominent rooftop structure, subsequent residential redevelopment and decades of maintenance and modification, the overall aesthetic is no longer truly authentic to the Art Moderne style.
- To the best of our knowledge, your description of the history of the building is correct however we believe you overstate the historical significance of the structure, particularly given its recent construction relative to other longer-standing, more genuinely historic buildings in the area.
- You call the building a “local landmark” yet few people would recognize it as “The Wesley Building”. In fact, the actual “landmark” tends to be the name and signage of the corner retailer, which changes over time. In the past, the building has generally been called the “Laura Secord Building” and the “World of Maps Building”. The Second Cup now occupying this retail space is already lending its name to the building. Similarly, it is often referred to as “the building across the street from the GCTC” given the prominence of the theatre’s signage and community presence.

Description of Heritage Attributes

- You describe the building as a “five storey massing with flat roof”. As you note in your historical description, the original Art Moderne style structure was 2 storeys, with the later addition of 3 more. More significantly, the current building has a prominent “6th floor”, brown painted, steel-clad rooftop structure now containing residential living space as well as exterior rooftop decks with canopies/pergola. As shown in the photograph, these structures are clearly visible from street level in all directions and are not consistent with the suggested Art Moderne style.
- You describe the “rounded corner” of the building. While the brickwork is rounded, the windows above ground level on the corner are actually flat panes installed at an angle (ie. faceted) and, as noted below, are not original.
- You highlight “awning windows on upper storeys” as a heritage attribute. In fact, the upper storey windows are not original and were installed in approximately 2016. Furthermore, the vast majority of windows on the upper storeys are actually fixed pane. Only approximately 1 in 10 window panes can be opened.
- You describe “large ground-floor glazing with recessed storefront entrances”. This is not particularly notable along the retail strip of Wellington St. W. Furthermore,



some of these windows are large fixed panes; others can be opened and folded back almost entirely while still others are entirely frosted due to the nature of the products being sold. Overall, there is considerable variation in ground floor glazing due to reasonable commercial needs, resulting in further inconsistency with authentic Art Moderne style.

- You refer to a “glass tile window” on the west side façade. To the best of our knowledge based on input from the residential developer, the glass block windows were not original elements of the building but were added in the late 1990’s as part of the residential redevelopment. Furthermore, due to abutting buildings these windows are almost entirely obscured.
- You refer to a “stone foundation”. In fact, to the best of our knowledge the building has a poured concrete foundation that has been either clad or parged.

In summary, while the entire group of owners remains to be consulted, the owners forming the condominium board of directors maintain that the rationale for heritage designation of 120 Holland Avenue is demonstrably weak. We disagree with and strongly oppose any intent to designate, particularly when there is such a large backlog of more significant buildings in the city genuinely warranting heritage designation. We trust you’ll factor the above information into your deliberations and would ask that you keep us informed of the next steps in the process.

Best regards

(on behalf of the board of OCCC601)

Board Member, OCCC601

120 Holland Ave.

Ottawa, Ontario, K1Y0X6

Cc. MacKenzie Kimm, OCCC601 Board of Directors