

**Subject: Designation of the Rothesay Apartments, 172 O'Connor Street under
Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act***

File Number: ACS2025-PDB-RHU-0023

**Report to Built Heritage Committee on 13 May 2025
and Council 11 June 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: Anne Fitzpatrick, Heritage Planner III, Heritage Planning Branch
613-580-2424,25651, Anne.Fitzpatrick@ottawa.ca**

Ward: Somerset (14)

**Objet : Désignation des appartements Rothesay, situés au 172, rue
O'Connor, aux termes de la partie IV de la *Loi sur le patrimoine de
l'Ontario***

Dossier : ACS2025-PDB-RHU-0023

Rapport au Comité du patrimoine bâti

le 13 mai 2025

et au Conseil le 11 juin 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 : Anne Fitzpatrick, Urbaniste III, Planification du Patrimoine
613-580-2424,25651, Anne.Fitzpatrick@ottawa.ca**

Quartier : Somerset (14)

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Built Heritage Committee recommend that Council:

1. Issue a Notice of Intention to Designate 172 O'Connor Street under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* according to the Statement of Cultural Heritage Value attached as Document 5.
2. Suspend the notice required under Subsections 29(3) and 34(1) of the *Procedure By-law* to consider this report at its meeting on June 11, 2025

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité du patrimoine bâti recommande au Conseil de :

1. Publier un avis d'intention de désigner la propriété située au 172, rue O'Connor, en vertu de la partie IV de la *Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario*, conformément à la déclaration de valeur sur le plan du patrimoine culturel faisant l'objet du document 5 ci-joint.
2. Suspendre l'avis requis en vertu des paragraphes 29(3) et 34(1) du *Règlement de procédure* afin qu'il examine le présent rapport à sa réunion du 11 juin 2025.

BACKGROUND

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

Constructed in 1910, the building at 172 O'Connor Street was originally known as the Rothesay Apartments. It is a three-storey, red brick, walk-up apartment building at the northwest corner of the intersection of Nepean and O'Connor Street, in the Centretown neighbourhood in Ottawa. 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 OHA.

The property is owned by the City and it is currently in the process of being declared surplus to municipal needs and the recommendation to declare the property surplus will be considered by the Finance and Corporate Services Committee through a report entitled *Declaration of Surplus Land- 172 O'Connor Street (ACS2025-SI-HSI-0012)* submitted by the Corporate Real Estate Office. The property requires repair and rehabilitation in order to ensure its long-term conservation and details of the building condition including engineering assessments will be shared with prospective purchasers. Heritage Planning Staff have worked collaboratively with our colleagues in

Realty Initiatives & Development and the proposed designation is identified in the disposal report and will be disclosed to all potential purchasers.

As part of the disposal notifications process, Heritage Planning staff undertook an evaluation the cultural heritage value of the building. The property was listed on the City of Ottawa Heritage Register in 2020 and was previously listed on the former City of Ottawa Heritage Reference List for many years. Changes to the *Ontario Heritage Act* through Bill 23 will result in the removal of these properties from the City Heritage Register if Council does not issue a Notice of Intention to Designate the properties by December 31, 2026. Further, Council will not be able to re-list the properties for five years after this date. Through Heritage staff review of the Register in spring 2023, as a result of Bill 23, this property was identified 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 following Official Plan policies in Section 4.5, Cultural Heritage and Archaeology are related to this application:

- 4.5.1(3): Individual buildings, structures, and sites shall be designated as properties of cultural heritage value under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- 4.5.3(7): The City shall protect, improve and manage City-owned built heritage resources in a manner that achieves or supports the heritage objectives of this Plan and sets an example of leadership in the conservation and stewardship of heritage resources.
- 4.5.3(8) The City shall designate City-owned built heritage resources that meet the criteria under the *Ontario Heritage Act* where appropriate and may prepare conservation plans for their maintenance.

Provincial Planning Statement (2024)

Section 4.6 of the Provincial Planning Statement (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 9/06

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 172 O'Connor Street 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:

The Rothesay Apartments is a representative example of Edwardian Classicism, which

was popular in Ontario in the early 20th century. Characterized by a simple and balanced design with understated Classically-inspired features, the Rothesay Apartments exemplifies Edwardian Classicism with its smooth red brick cladding, flat roof, repeating bay windows, plain stone sills and lintels, and a decorative cornice. Additionally, 172 O'Connor Street is representative of a traditional low-rise apartment building that are prevalent in Centretown with its three- to four-storey massing, brick cladding with stone embellishment, flat roof, and ornamentation focused on the roofline.

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 building at 172 O'Connor Street has a direct association with the development and intensification of Centretown in the early 20th century. Constructed between 1909-1910, the Rothesay Apartments was part of the earliest phase of construction of walk-up apartment buildings in Ottawa, which began circa 1903. Prior to this, multi-unit residential buildings were generally rooming houses or hotels. In the early 20th century in Canada, with Montreal leading the way, there was a demand for high-quality apartments that provided permanent accommodation for the growing middle class. In Ottawa, the growing federal civil service resulted in new apartment buildings being constructed within existing residential neighbourhoods such as Centretown and Sandy Hill, where residents could walk to work in the expanding parliamentary or commercial districts.

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:

The Rothesay Apartments yields information about women's history and their increasing independence in the early 20th century. With few occupational options for women, many moved to the city from the surrounding rural areas seeking employment as domestic servants or shop clerks and later in the civil service, specifically in response to the First World War. With the acceptance of apartment buildings as respectable places to live coinciding with the large numbers of women entering the workforce, a significant population of single women lived in Centretown buildings such as the Rothesay Apartments. This shift to single women living alone and working independently was part of the beginnings of broader societal shifts in women's rights in 20th century Canada.

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

As an Edwardian Classicist, low-rise apartment building, clad in red brick, the

architectural style, building typology and material of 172 O'Connor Street defines and maintains the historic residential character of Centretown. Centretown's architectural character is predominantly residential buildings constructed between the 1870s and 1914 in Late Victorian and Edwardian Classicism architectural styles, heavily featuring single detached houses, row houses, and low-rise apartment buildings and red brick was the dominant building material.

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

172 O'Connor Street is contextually linked to its surroundings as it contributes to the early apartment concentration in Ottawa in Central Centretown constructed before the First World War. Central Centretown was a suitable location for the intensification and accessible for those working downtown. Additionally, The Rothesay Apartments is visually linked to its surroundings for its proximity to several other historic walk-up apartment buildings. Finally, The Rothesay Apartments is functionally linked to its surroundings for its use as a multi-unit residential building from its opening in 1910 until 2024.

Conclusion

The property at 172 O'Connor Street meets five of the nine criteria for designation outlined in Ontario Regulation 9/06 for designation under Part IV of the OHA. In addition, the designation of this property will fulfill the Official Plan policies that direct the designation of City-owned buildings and encourage leadership on the part of the City in the stewardship of its historic buildings. 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 recommendations in this report.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)

The ward councillor is aware of the recommendations associated with this report.

CONSULTATION

The City of Ottawa is the owner of the building. Staff in Infrastructure and Water Services, Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services and Strategic Initiatives departments are aware of the designation.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

The designation of a property under the *Ontario Heritage Act* does not impact physical fabric of the building. 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 resulting from the recommendations of this report.

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

DISPOSITION

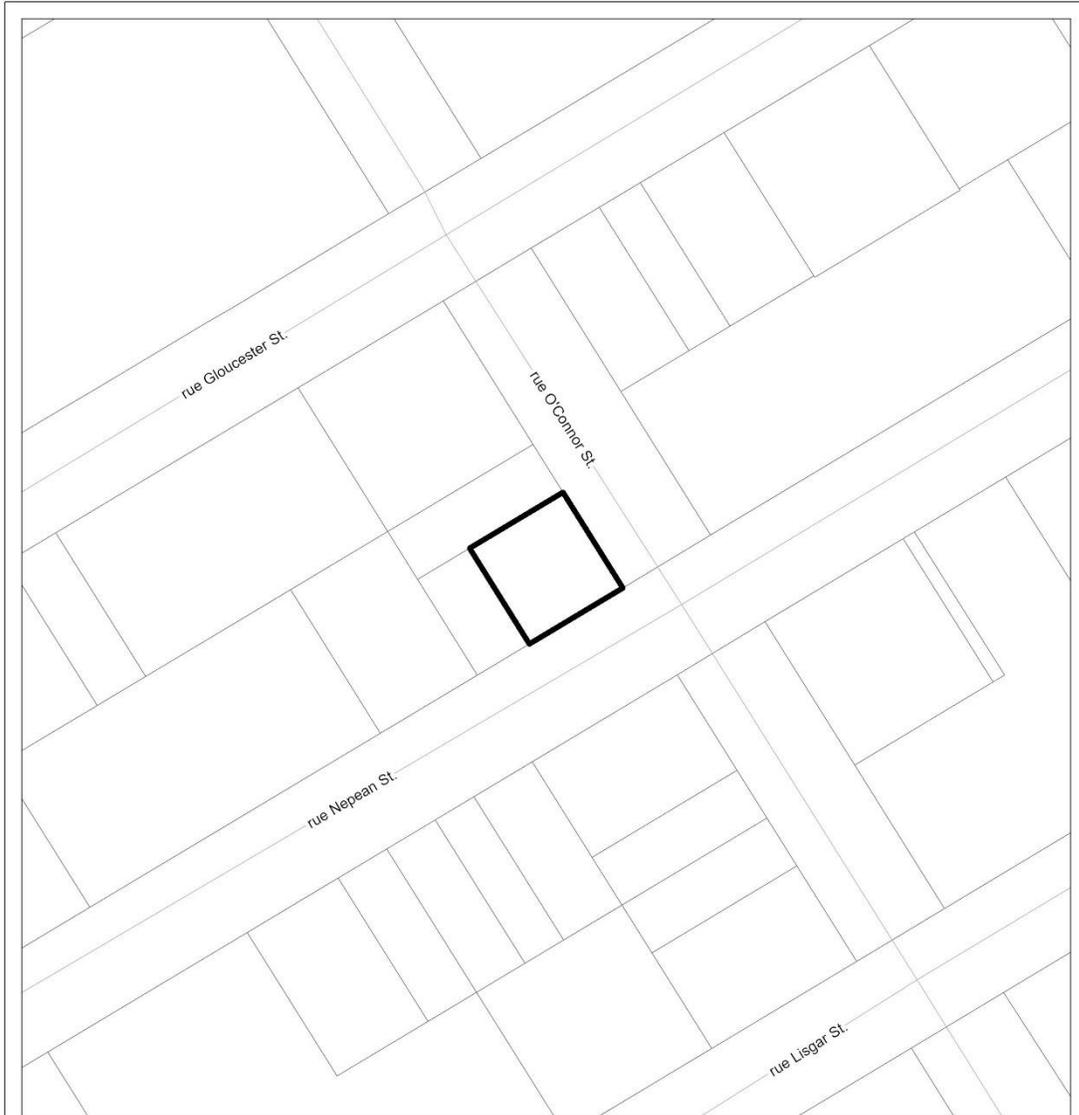
If Council does not carry the recommendation, no further steps are required. If Council proceeds with the issuance of a Notice of Intention to Designate for the property located at 172 O'Connor Street, several actions must be taken:

- 1) Heritage Planning Branch, Planning, Development, 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 172 O'Connor Street Avenue under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

- 2) Heritage Planning Branch, Planning, Development, 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, 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, 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, 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*.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 Location Map



		LOCATION MAP / PLAN DE LOCALISATION HERITAGE / PATRIMOINE	
D09-01-OCON172	25-0348-R	 172 rue O'Connor St.	 <small>NOT TO SCALE</small>
I:\CO\2025\Heritage\OConnor_172			
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<small>©Les données de parcelles appartiennent à Terramet Enterprises Inc. et à ses fournisseurs. Tous droits réservés. Ne peut être reproduit sans autorisation. CE CI N'EST PAS UN PLAN D'ARPENTAGE.</small>			
REVISION / RÉVISION - 2025 / 03 / 27			

Document 2 Photos



O'Connor Street Elevation (Staff Photo, 2025).



MacLaren Street Elevation (Staff Photo, 2025).

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

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value – 172 O’Connor Street

Description of Property

The Rothesay Apartments, 172 O’Connor Street, is a three-storey, red brick, walk-up apartment building with a raised basement at the northwest corner of the intersection of Nepean and O’Connor Street, in the Centretown neighbourhood in Ottawa.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The building at 172 O’Connor Street, originally known as the Rothesay Apartments, is a representative example of Edwardian Classicism, which was popular in Ontario in the early 20th century. Characterized by a simple and balanced design with understated classically inspired features, the Rothesay Apartments exemplifies the Edwardian Classicist style with its smooth red brick cladding, flat roof, repeating bay windows, plain stone sills and lintels, and a decorative cornice. Additionally, 172 O’Connor Street is representative of the low-rise apartment buildings that are prevalent in Centretown.

The building at 172 O’Connor Street has a direct association with the development and intensification of Centretown in the early twentieth century. Constructed in 1910, the Rothesay Apartments was part of the earliest phase of construction of walk-up apartment buildings in Ottawa, which began c. 1903. Prior to this, multi-unit residential buildings were generally rooming houses or hotels. In the early twentieth century in Canada, with Montreal leading the way, there was a demand for high-quality apartments that provided permanent accommodation for the growing middle class. In Ottawa, the growing federal civil service resulted in new apartment buildings being constructed within existing residential neighbourhoods such as Centretown and Sandy Hill, where residents could walk to work in the expanding parliamentary or commercial districts.

The Rothesay Apartments yields information about women’s history, notably their increasing independence in the early 20th century. With few occupational options for women, many moved from the surrounding rural areas seeking employment such as domestic servants or shop clerks and later in the civil service, specifically in response to the First World War. With the acceptance of apartment buildings as respectable places to live at the same time large numbers of women were entering the workforce, a significant population of single women lived in Centretown buildings such as the Rothesay Apartments. This shift to single women living alone and working independently was part of the beginnings of broader societal shifts in women's rights in 20th century Canada.

Centretown’s architectural character is predominantly residential red brick buildings

constructed between 1890-1914, including a mix of residential building types including single detached houses, row houses, and low-rise apartment buildings. As a red brick, walk up apartment building, the Rothesay Apartments supports the local residential character. The building is also contextually linked to its surroundings by its corner lot location, proximity to other early apartment buildings, and its use as a multi-unit residential building since its opening

Description of Heritage Attributes

Key exterior attributes that contribute to the heritage value of 172 O'Connor Street as a representative example of walk-up apartment with Edwardian Classicist architectural features include:

- Three-storey massing with raised basement
- Symmetrical front facade on O'Connor Street
- Square plan with narrow interior courtyard on west façade
- Stone foundation
- Flat roof
- Red brick cladding with recessed decorative stringcourses below the first storey
- Regular rectangular window openings with contrasting stone plain lug sills and plain lintels
- Oriel windows on the second and third stories with paneling
- Centrally located entrance on O'Connor Street with a large single transom with a decorated trim
- Cornice with decorative moulded frieze, fascia and soffit with brackets
- Metal balconies with curved railings

Contextual attribute that contributes to the heritage value of 172 O'Connor Street:

- Its location at the corner of O'Connor Street and Nepean Street and its orientation to O'Connor Street

The interior of the building is excluded in this designation.

Document 5 Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report

Ontario Regulation 9/06 Assessment

Address: 172 O'Connor Street

Date: April 2025

Prepared by: Heritage Staff



172 O'Connor Street, south and east façades, Source: City of Ottawa, 2025

Executive Summary

The property at 172 O'Connor Street includes a three-storey, red brick, walk-up apartment building with a raised basement at the northwest corner of the intersection of Nepean and O'Connor Streets, in the Centretown neighbourhood. Constructed 1909-1910, the building was originally known as the Rothesay Apartments and exemplifies the Edwardian Classicist style. 172 O'Connor Street was built during the early phase of walk-up apartment building construction in Ottawa and is associated with the development and intensification of Centretown in the early 20th century. Apartment buildings accommodated the growing middle class and came to be accepted as respectable places to live for the expanding civil service. Centretown apartments including the Rothesay Apartments were home specifically to many single women in Ottawa who obtained new careers in the civil service in the early 20th century. As a red brick, walk up apartment building, the Rothesay Apartments supports the local residential character. The building is also contextually linked to its surroundings by its corner lot location, proximity to other early apartment buildings.

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.

Criterion 1	
The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.	Yes
Response to Criterion	
<p>The building at 172 O'Connor Street, originally known as the Rothesay Apartments, is a representative example of Edwardian Classicist architecture, which was popular in Ontario in the early 20th century. Characterized by a simple and balanced design with understated Classically-inspired features, the Rothesay Apartments exemplifies Edwardian Classicism with its smooth red brick cladding, flat roof, repeating bay windows, plain stone sills and lintels, and a decorative cornice. Additionally, 172 O'Connor Street is representative of a traditional low-rise apartment building that are prevalent in Centretown. This is illustrated through its low, three to four storey massing, multiple units, brick cladding with stone embellishment, flat roof, ornamentation typically focused on the roofline such as an ornate cornice.</p>	

Supporting Details – Criterion 1

Architectural Analysis and Overview

172 O'Connor Street was constructed between 1909 and 1910 and has design value as a representative example of Edwardian Classicism, and representative of a traditional walk-up apartment building in Centretown as a typology.

Architectural Style Description and Canadian Context

Edwardian Classicism is associated with the British monarch Edward VII who reigned from 1901 to 1910. The style developed in England from the Beaux Arts movement with revived Classicism through an eclectic and selective application of Classical forms.¹ Edwardian Classicism was popularized around the turn of the 20th century to the end of the First World War.² In response to the transforming social climate, Edwardian Classicism featured simplified forms with balanced façades and central entrance, in contrast to the Late Victorian architectural styles with asymmetrical, eclectic, and

¹ Shannon Ricketts, Leslie Maitland, and Jacqueline Hucker, *A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles*, Second Edition, (Broadview Press, 2004) 123.

² Shannon Kyles, "Edwardian (1890-1916)," Ontario Architecture, accessed February 25, 2025, <http://www.ontarioarchitecture.com/Edwardian.html>; "Ontario Architectural Style Guide," University of Waterloo Heritage Resources Centre, last modified January 2009, <https://www.therealtydeal.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Heritage-Resource-Centre-Achitectural-Styles-Guide.pdf>, 18.

complex forms.³ It was used on large scale public and commercial buildings to demonstrate the nation's imperial power, and colonies including Canada quickly adopted the style and its application to residential buildings.⁴

In Ontario, Edwardian Classicism was most popular during the first quarter of the 20th century.⁵ Edwardian Classicism served as a transition between the eclectic styles of residential architecture from the 19th century towards the simplified designs of the mid-20th century.⁶ The Edwardian Classicist architectural style in Ontario is characterized by its compact, square or rectangular massing, balanced façades, flat rooflines, simple colour schemes, smooth brick surfaces with multiple windows with stone sills, understated application of Classical features (colonettes, voussiors, keystones, cornices, columns, pilasters, pediments etc.), entrance in the porch or verandah, and restrained ornamentation.⁷

Architectural Style Locally

Examples of Edwardian Classicism in Ottawa date from the end of the 19th century into the late 1930s. Following vernacular buildings, Edwardian Classicism represents the largest number of buildings on the Heritage Register, closely followed by Queen Anne Revival buildings in the city. This is reflected in Centretown and Centretown West with Edwardian Classicism being the highest represented style in the neighbourhood. A few buildings constructed in the Edwardian Classicist in Ottawa were public buildings such as schools, however the vast majority were constructed for residential purposes. In Centretown and Centretown West, over 90 per cent of properties on the Heritage Register are residential buildings with only 30 representing low-rise apartment buildings, and 172 O'Connor Street is one of 12 of those designed in the Edwardian Classicist style.



75 Florence Street, Source: Google Streetview, 2017



480 Cooper Street, Source: Google Streetview, 2019



198 O'Connor Street, Source: City of Ottawa, 2025

³ John Blumenson, *Ontario Architecture: A Guide to Styles and Building Terms 1784 to the present*, (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1990), 166.

⁴ Ricketts, Maitland, and Hucker, *A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles*, 127.

⁵ Blumenson, *Ontario Architecture: A Guide to Styles and Building Terms 1784 to the present*, 166.

⁶ "Edwardian (1890-1916)."

⁷ "Architectural Style: Edwardian Classicism," Ontario Heritage Trust, accessed February 25, 2025,

<https://www.heritagetrust.on.ca/places-of-worship/places-of-worship-database/architecture/architectural-style;>

"Ontario Architectural Style Guide," 18.



482, 484, 486, 484 Lisgar Street, Source: Google Streetview, 2023



298 Arlington Street, Source: Google Streetview, 2019

Currently, only four apartment buildings in Ottawa are Part IV designated with two located in Centretown, The Duncannon at 216 Metcalfe Street and The Shefford at 300 Cooper Street (designed Horwood, Taylor, and Horwood).

Relation of the Building to the Style

The Edwardian Classicist style is exemplified by 172 O'Connor Street through its square form, flat roof, red brick cladding, smooth façades, contrasting plain stone lug sills and lintels, repeating rectangular window openings, repeating bay windows, and minimal ornamentation focused on the roofline as a decorative cornice. 172 O'Connor Street is slightly elevated in its level of ornamentation compared to other traditional walk-ups as it has plain paneling on its bay windows, a decorative recessed brick stringcourses below the first storey, a decorative recessed brick entranceways with stepped detailed by the lintels. There do not appear to be any exterior alterations except for updates to the transom windows with the changing building name.



172 O'Connor Street, west façade and courtyard, Source: City of Ottawa, 2025



172 O'Connor Street, south façade, Source: City of Ottawa, 2025



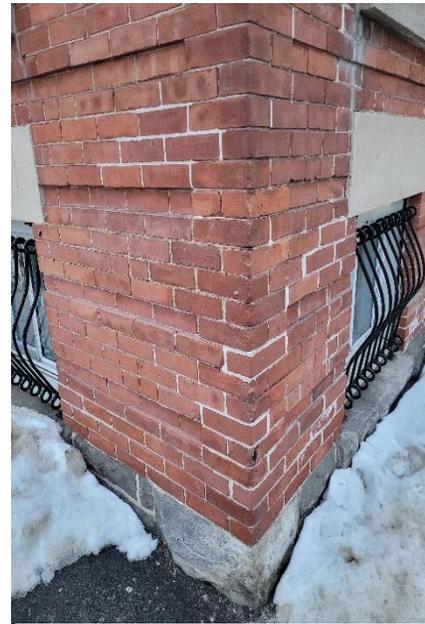
172 O'Connor Street, east façade, O'Connor entrance, Source: City of Ottawa,



172 O'Connor Street, south façade, Source: City of Ottawa, 2025



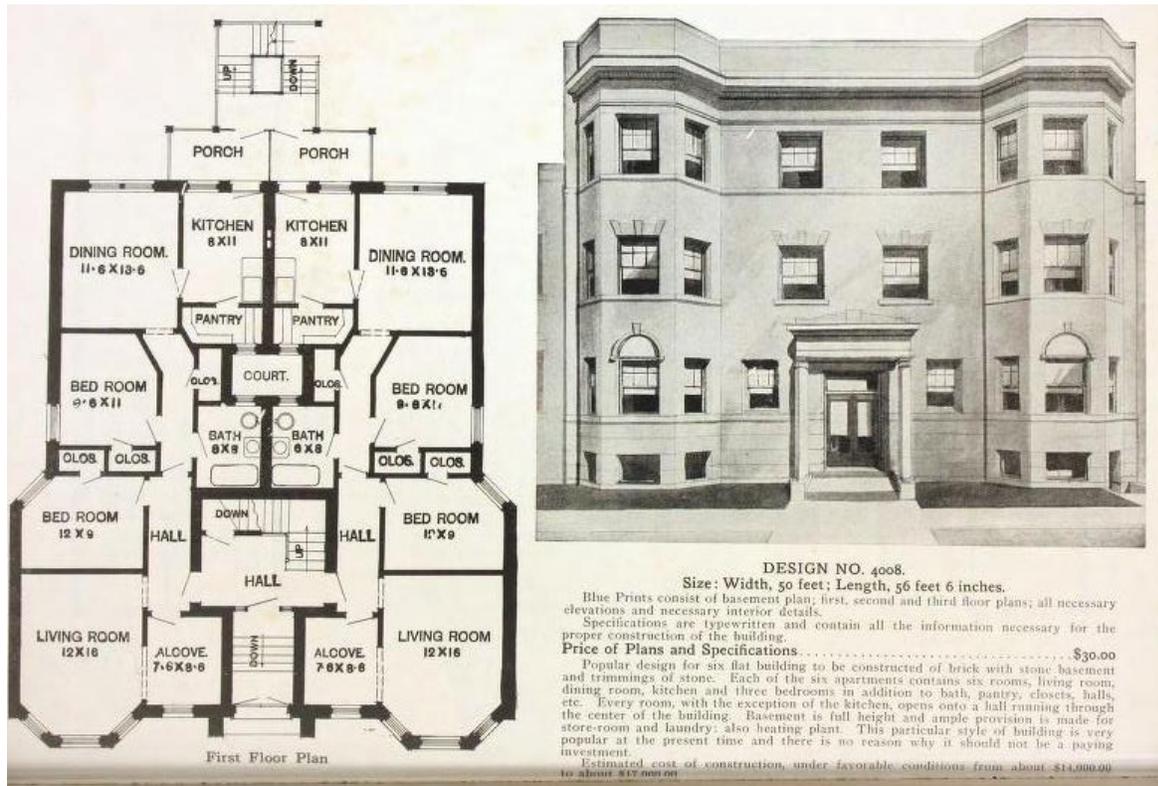
172 O'Connor Street, east façade, Source: City of Ottawa, 2025



172 O'Connor Street, southeast corner, Source: City of Ottawa, 2025

Constructed 1909-1910, the Rothesay Apartments is an early example of a traditional walk-up apartment building in Centretown. This is demonstrated by its low, three to four storey massing, brick cladding with stone embellishment, raised basement, flat roof, ornamentation typically focused on the roofline such as an ornate cornice. Some similarities can be demonstrated by comparing 172 O'Connor Street to architectural

plans for an apartment building in Radford's Portfolio of Plans (1909),⁸ including a similar construction cost (\$17,000).⁹



Design No. 4008, Source: Radford, *Radford's Portfolio of Plans*, 1909, <https://archive.org/details/RadfordsPortfolioOfPlansAStandardCollectionOfNewAndOriginal/page/n269/mode/2up>

However, the building design is somewhat rare with its curved courtyard on the rear/west façade compared to contemporary early 20th century low-rise apartments that did not have courtyards. 172 O'Connor Street may demonstrate the architectural transition from early Edwardian traditional walk-ups towards the Art Deco or Moderne influenced mid-rise "H" or "U" shaped courtyard walk-ups or the more ornate architect designed "Grande-Dame" walk-ups.¹⁰

⁸ William A. Radford, *Radford's Portfolio of Plans*, (The Bradford Architectural Company, 1909), 270, <https://archive.org/details/RadfordsPortfolioOfPlansAStandardCollectionOfNewAndOriginal/page/n269/mode/2up>.

⁹ *Contract Record*, vol 23, no. 34, August 25, 1909, 21, <https://archive.org/details/contractrecordv23p02/page/n415/mode/2up>.

¹⁰ Julian Smith & Associates, Margaret Carter, Joann Latremouille, Mary Faught, Jane Ironside, and Kevin Deevey, *Centretown Heritage Conservation District Study*, (1996-1997), 73.



172 O'Connor Street, Source: City of



172 O'Connor Street, Source:



191 McLeod Street, Source: Google Streetvi



191 McLeod Street, Source:



413 Metcalfe Street, Source: City of Ottawa, 413 Metcalfe Street, Source:



(1911) at 413 Elgin Street built around the same time as The Rothesay Apartments (1909-10) have clear design similarities with their Edwardian Classicism architectural features, bay windows, and ornate cornice. However, only 172 O'Connor Street features a courtyard and in a unique shape. Therefore 172 O'Connor Street is representative of an early traditional walk-up apartment with a unique, curved courtyard design.

Criterion 2

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

No

Response to Criterion

Heritage staff have reviewed primary sources 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

typical Edwardian Classicist design with brick cladding and detailing, upper storey bay windows, modest ornamentation focused on the roofline with a decorative cornice, and metal balconies, the property does not display a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.

Criterion 3	
The property has design value or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.	No
Response to Criterion	
Heritage staff have reviewed primary sources 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 172 O'Connor Street is typical of the building's construction era and type. As such, the property does not display a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.	

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	
The building at 172 O'Connor Street has a direct association with the development and intensification of Centretown in the early 20 th century. Constructed between 1909-1910, the Rothesay Apartments was part of the earliest phase of construction of walk-up apartment buildings in Ottawa, which began circa 1903. Prior to this, multi-unit residential buildings were generally rooming houses or hotels. In the early twentieth century in Canada, with Montreal leading way, there was a demand for high-quality apartments that provided permanent accommodation for the growing middle class. In Ottawa, the growing federal civil service resulted in new apartment buildings being constructed within existing residential neighbourhoods such as Centretown and Sandy Hill, where residents could walk to work in the expanding parliamentary or commercial districts. The early residents of the Rothesay Apartment buildings reflected this trend and included prominent citizens and civil servants.	

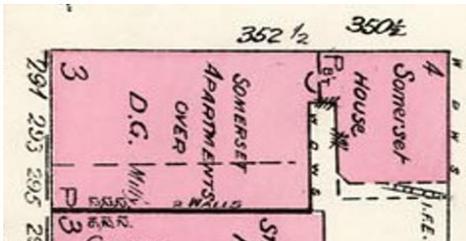
Supporting Details – Criterion 4

172 O'Connor Street has historical value as it contributes to the residential development and intensification in Centretown during the early 20th century. Ottawa saw its first phase of population growth after being named the Dominion of Canada's capital in

1857, almost tripling between 1851 and 1871 from 7,760 to 21, 545.¹¹ This population growth followed the construction of the Parliament buildings resulting in working-class jobs to new government positions creating a construction boom in the city and specifically in Centretown.¹² Land in Centretown became available for development beginning in the 1870s which transformed the area south of Parliament into a 19th century residential neighbourhood for the emerging civil service.¹³ Along with other

emerging central residential neighbourhoods such as Sandy Hill, Centretown allowed those who worked downtown to walk to work. The high demand for housing continued into the early 20th century with the intensification of Centretown with the conversion of stately homes into multiple units, rentals added above commercial spaces, and the construction of purpose-built apartments.¹⁴ Housing choices for single or transient working people such as businessmen or government officials before the 20th century included hotels and boarding houses, and there was a need for affordable, single occupancy options.¹⁵

Originating in Paris, apartment houses first appeared in large American cities such as New York and Boston in the mid 19th century.¹⁶ Montreal pioneered the construction and popularity of apartment buildings in Canada in the late 19th century as they became recognized as respectable housing for the upper and middle classes. Between 1880 and 1914, more than 200 apartments were erected in Montreal.¹⁷ The trend of



Somerset House and
Somerset Apartments,
Source: *Ottawa Fire*



Somerset House, 1979,
Source: Google City of Ottawa



Former Somerset
Apartments, Source:
Google Streetview,
2022

¹¹ John Taylor, "Ottawa," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, last modified September 10, 2024, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/ottawa-ont>.

¹² Taylor, "Ottawa."

¹³ ERA, *Centretown Heritage Inventory, Ottawa, Ontario*, (ERA, 2020), 23.

¹⁴ ERA, *Centretown Heritage Inventory, Ottawa, Ontario*, (ERA, 2020), 23.

¹⁵ Heritage Ottawa, *From Walk-Up to High-Rise: Ottawa's Historic Apartment Buildings*, (Heritage Ottawa: 2017), 5.

¹⁶ Heritage Ottawa, *From Walk-Up to High-Rise: Ottawa's Historic Apartment Buildings*, 7.

¹⁷ Heritage Ottawa, *From Walk-Up to High-Rise: Ottawa's Historic Apartment Buildings*, 5.

apartment development and living was slowly adopted in other major cities including Toronto, Ottawa, and Winnipeg was not without skepticism.¹⁸ Apartment houses formerly referred to either low-income tenements or luxury rooms with hotel conveniences.

North American cities were reluctant to build apartments as they were considered “insanitary, anti-family, and a threat to established property values, undermining “cities of homes” both morally and economically.”¹⁹ Architects began designing apartments resolving privacy and amenity concerns, and they eventually were recognized as respectable places to live by the middle and upper classes, and reflected modern, urban society.²⁰

Ottawa adopted the trend in the early 20th century with the first apartment building documented in the *Ottawa City Directories* in 1903, including the Ottawa Apartment House (demolished) on Laurier Avenue West between Metcalfe Street and Elgin Street, and Somerset House at 350 ½ Somerset Street (demolished) and with Somerset Apartments built by 1904 at the southeast corner of Somerset Street and Bank Street.²¹ The popularity of apartment buildings in Ottawa continued into the 1930s and most historic apartments were built before 1950. Compared to other major Canadian cities during the Depression that experienced delays or cancellation of residential projects, Ottawa had a surge of construction projects and specifically apartments.²²

The Rothesay Apartments was home to typical apartment tenants including single, widowed, and married families who worked as civil servants, businessmen, and politicians downtown. In the first decade of opening, Rothesay Apartment residents worked for the Department of Public Works, Post Office Department, Department of Mines, Customs Department, National Finance Company, The Canadian Fairbanks Company, Dominion Police as a constable.²³

Criterion 5	
The property has historical or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.	Yes

¹⁸ Heritage Ottawa, *From Walk-Up to High-Rise: Ottawa’s Historic Apartment Buildings*, 5.

¹⁹ Richard Dennis, “Apartment Housing in Canadian Cities, 1900-1940,” *Urban History Review* 26, no. 2, (March 1998): 17, <https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/uhr/1998-v26-n2-uhr0659/1016656ar.pdf>.

²⁰ Heritage Ottawa, *From Walk-Up to High-Rise: Ottawa’s Historic Apartment Buildings*, 7.

²¹ *Ottawa City Directory*, 1903, 531.

²² Christopher Ryan, “A Wolf on Elgin Street (The Park Square apartments at 425 Elgin),” *Ottawa Start*, April 5, 2014, <https://ottawastart.com/christopher-ryan-a-wolf-on-elgin-street-the-park-square-apartments-at-425-elgin/>.

²³ *Ottawa City Directory*, 1910, 296; *Ottawa City Directory*, 1911, 289, 208, 544, 703; *Ottawa City Directory*, 1915, 428.

Response to Criterion

The Rothesay Apartments yield information about the history of women's independence in the early 20th century. With few occupational options for women, many moved from the surrounding rural areas seeking employment as domestic servants or shop clerks and later in the civil service, specifically in response to the First World War. With the acceptance of apartment buildings as respectable places to live at the same time large numbers of women were entering the workforce, a significant population of single women lived in Centretown apartments such as the Rothesay Apartments. This shift to single women living alone and working independently was part of the beginnings of broader societal shifts in women's rights in 20th century Canada.

Supporting Details – Criterion 5

The Rothesay Apartments has historical value in that it directly contributes to the theme of Centretown apartments being home for a large demographic of single women. With few occupational options for women, many moved from the surrounding rural areas such as the Ottawa Valley to Ottawa seeking employment opportunities as domestic servants or shop clerks.²⁴ In the 20th century, the civil service was accepted as a respectable career for women, specifically in response to their growing need during the First World War.²⁵ Women either obtained new positions or replaced positions previously held by men. Following the war, many continued their careers in the civil service.²⁶ With the acceptance of apartment buildings becoming respectable places to live around the same time large numbers of female civil servants were entering the workforce, a significant population of single women lived in Centretown apartment buildings that they could afford with their modest salaries.²⁷

This theme is demonstrated at 172 O'Connor Street especially during its first few years of opening with several single women who worked as clerks living at the Rothesay Apartments. In 1911, Rothesay Apartments residents included Miss Magdalene Casey, an archives clerk in the Agricultural Department and Miss Mary E Casey, a patent clerk in the Interior Department (federal administration of lands west of Ontario/Manitoba border²⁸) who both lived there until 1914 until they moved to 250 Cooper Street, another

²⁴ Sally Coutts Heritage Consulting Inc., *Centretown and Minto Park Heritage Conservation District Plan*, (City of Ottawa, Heritage Planning Branch, 2022), 8.

²⁵ Julian Smith & Associates et al, *Centretown Heritage Conservation District Study*, 21.

²⁶ Julian Smith & Associates, Margaret Carter, Joann Latremouille, Mary Faught, Jane Ironside, and Kevin Deevey, *Centretown Heritage Conservation District Study*, 21.

²⁷ Julian Smith & Associates, Margaret Carter, Joann Latremouille, Mary Faught, Jane Ironside, and Kevin Deevey, *Centretown Heritage Conservation District Study*, 22.

²⁸ Department of the Interior fonds [textual record (some microform), graphic material, cartographic material], Department of the Interior fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, <http://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.redirect?app=fonandcol&id=30&lang=eng>.

Centretown walk-up apartment a few blocks away.²⁹ Sisters Miss Ruby M. Rothwell, a Public Library cataloguer and Miss Fanny H Rothwell, a clerk in the Post Office Department lived at 172 O'Connor Street from 1911 and 1911 to 1913 respectively.³⁰ Miss Mary C Doyle, a private secretary in the Department of Marine & Fisheries also called the Rothesay Apartments home from 1910 to 1915, until she moved a couple blocks south to another walk-up apartment building, 318 Cooper Street.³¹ It's therefore evident the Rothesay Apartments supports the theme of women in the workforce, and single women living in Centretown apartments and likely walking to work downtown from the early 20th century onwards.

The Rothesay Apartments also reflects the changing trends in apartment buildings being recognized as respectable places to live. For example, Lady Isabelle Bourinot, widow of Sir John G Bourinot who was considered Canada's expert on parliamentary authority and a historian lived at The Rothesay Apartments in 1910,³² and the following year, one of Ottawa's most prominent families, Dorinda Mutchmor, the widow of Alexander Mutchmore and head of the Mutchmore estate lived there.³³

Criterion 6	
The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.	No
Response to Criterion	
Based on primary and secondary source research conducted by Heritage Staff, no architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist has been associated with 172 O'Connor Street. Primary sources only indicate that the Mr. E. C. Hayes obtained the permits and constructed an apartment building at the corner of O'Connor and Nepean streets.	

²⁹ *Ottawa City Directory*, 1911, 262; *Ottawa City Directory*, 1912, 271, 272; *Ottawa City Directory*, 1913, 279, 280; *Ottawa City Directory*, 1914, 294; *Ottawa City Directory*, 1915, 303.

³⁰ "Miss R. Rothwell Died of Typhoid," *The Ottawa Journal*, March 6, 1911, accessed March 26, 2025, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/43912555/>; "Obituary," *The Ottawa Journal*, March 10, 1911, accessed March 26, 2025, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/43912826/>; *Ottawa City Directory*, 1911, 262; 678; *Ottawa City Directory*, 1912, 719; *Ottawa City Directory*, 1913, 728;

³¹ *Ottawa City Directory*, 1911, 338; *Ottawa City Directory*, 1912, 348; *Ottawa City Directory*, 1913, 356; *Ottawa City Directory*, 1914, 377; *Ottawa City Directory*, 1915, 383; *Ottawa City Directory*, 1916, 391.

³² "Lady I. Bourinot Dies in Hospital Ill a Short Time," *The Ottawa Journal*, July 23, 1930, accessed March 27, 2025, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/44479408/>; *Ottawa City Directory*, 1910, 212.

³³ "Mrs. A. Mutchmore Dies in Montreal," *The Ottawa Journal*, August 4, 1924, accessed March 27, 2025, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/48340901/>; *Ottawa City Directory*, 1911, 593.

Criterion 7	
The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.	Yes
Response to Criterion	
The Edwardian Classicist expression with red brick cladding of 172 O'Connor Street defines and maintains Centretown's historic residential character. Centretown's architectural character is predominantly residential buildings constructed between 1870s-1914 in Late Victorian and Edwardian Classicism architectural styles, heavily featuring single detached houses, row houses, and low-rise apartment buildings and red brick was the dominant building material.	

Supporting Details – Criterion 7

The Rothesay Apartments defines the historic and maintains the contemporary residential red brick character of Centretown. Centretown is situated between Bronson Street, Gloucester Street, the Rideau Canal, and Catherine Street. Due to the development patterns of Centretown, ERA's *Centretown Heritage Inventory* identifies 172 O'Connor Street within the boundaries of Central Centretown between Bank Street, Elgin Street.³⁴ However, it acknowledges that the limits are somewhat fluid in its transition from the West of Bank and Golden Triangle residential character areas to a more diverse collection of building use, scale, styles, and forms.³⁵ As a whole, Centretown is an eclectic combination of commercial and mixed-use areas focused on Bank and Elgin Street, and a predominantly residential with a large range of modest to extravagant residences on surrounding streets.

³⁴ ERA, *Centretown Heritage Inventory, Ottawa, Ontario*, Appendix A, Map 13: Property Classifications-Central Centretown Character Area.

³⁵ ERA, *Centretown Heritage Inventory, Ottawa, Ontario*, 40.

higher density housing in the early 20th century, apartment buildings were added in Centretown amongst the existing Victorian and Edwardian residential streetscapes.³⁹ This included construction of apartments amongst lavish residential buildings on Metcalfe Street, a prestigious promenade connecting the Victoria Museum (Canadian Museum of Nature) to Parliament Hill.⁴⁰ Therefore many apartment buildings, especially those built before the First World War such as The Rothesay Apartments, fit in seamlessly within Centretown's established residential built character.

Across Ontario in the 19th and 20th centuries, red brick was a readily available local construction material that became prolific in its residential application. In Centretown, red brick was the most prevalent construction material and was used on many building



O'Connor St looking north from Lisgar, (172 O'Connor Street in left background),
Source: Library and Archives Canada.



Gloucester St looking west from O'Connor,
Source: Library and Archives Canada.

types such as residential and commercial.⁴¹ Red brick was used in Centretown's early periods of construction and continues to be used (to be compatible with the neighbourhood).⁴² Red brick was the preferred construction material for historic Centretown apartments occasionally with stone accents.⁴³ Of the eleven common Centretown building types in ERA's Centretown Heritage Inventory, all building types

³⁹ ERA, *Centretown Heritage Inventory, Ottawa, Ontario*, 49.

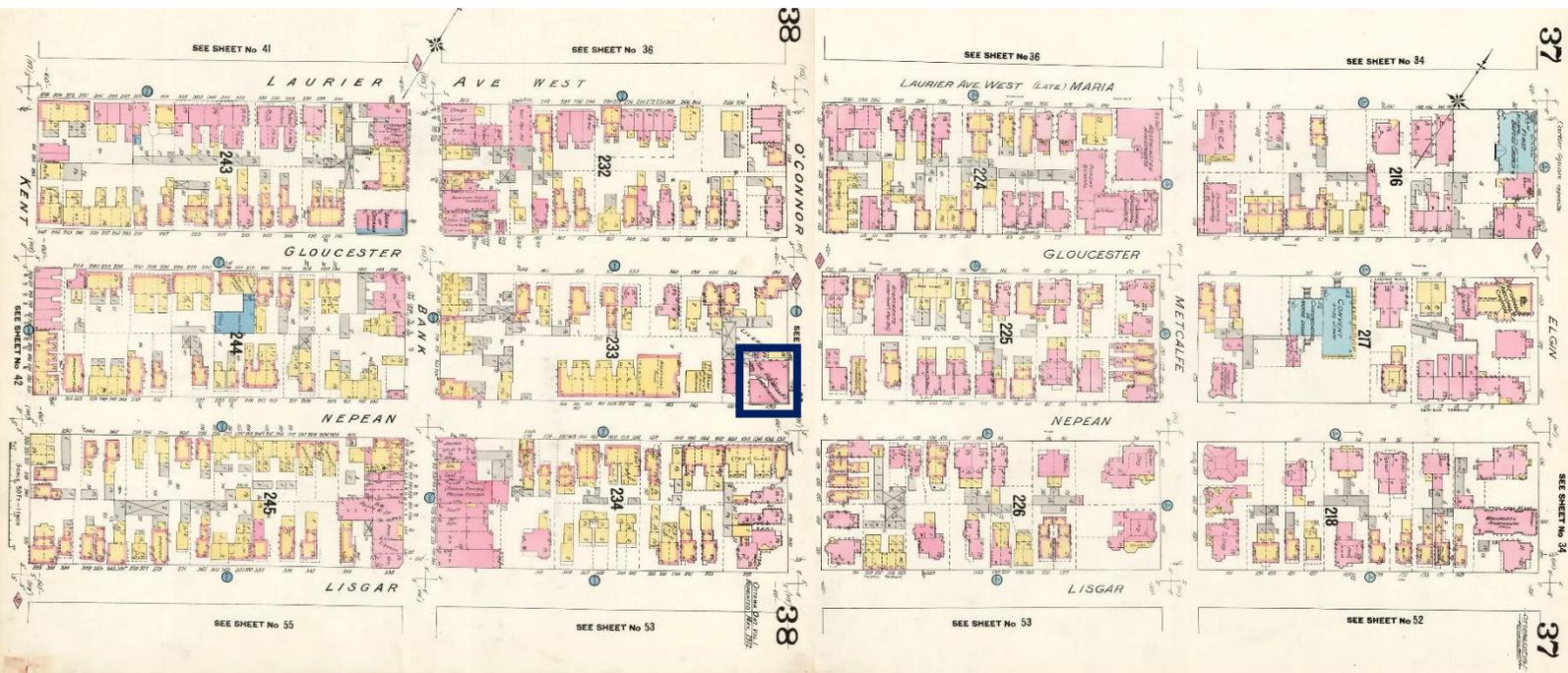
⁴⁰ Heritage Ottawa, *From Walk-Up to High-Rise: Ottawa's Historic Apartment Buildings*, 8; ERA, *Centretown Heritage Inventory, Ottawa, Ontario*, Appendix A: Common Centretown Building Types – page 1 of 2.

⁴¹ Sally Coutts Heritage Consulting Inc., *Centretown and Minto Park Heritage Conservation District Plan*, 12.

⁴² ERA, *Centretown Heritage Inventory, Ottawa, Ontario*, 39.

⁴³ Heritage Ottawa, *From Walk-Up to High-Rise: Ottawa's Historic Apartment Buildings*, 15; ERA, *Centretown Heritage Inventory, Ottawa, Ontario*, 44.

are documented as having brick construction or cladding.⁴⁴ The *Ottawa Fire Insurance Plans* from the early to mid 20th century⁴⁵ demonstrate the widespread use of brick as a construction material in Centretown. Only two years after the construction of 172 O'Connor Street, the 1912 *Fire Insurance Plans* illustrates (in pink) the prevalent use of brick construction or brick facades on its surrounding blocks from Laurier Avenue West to Kent Street, Lisgar Street, and O'Connor Street.⁴⁶



172 O'Connor Street (black outline), Source: *Ottawa Fire Insurance Plans*, 1912, Volume 1, 38, 37.

Centretown experienced intense development from the 1950s to 1970s and many pre-First World War and low-rise residential units demolished and replaced with high-rise, concrete slab buildings altering and reducing the residential built character of the area.⁴⁷ However the red brick residential character of Centretown remains, which can be demonstrated by the blocks north and south of 172 O'Connor Street.

Criterion 8

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

Yes

⁴⁴ ERA, *Centretown Heritage Inventory, Ottawa, Ontario*, Appendix A: Common Centretown Building Types – page 1 of 2; 2 of 2.

⁴⁵ *Ottawa Fire Insurance Plans*, 1901, 1912, 1922, volume 1, 38; 1948, volume 1, 122; 1965, volume 1, 122.

⁴⁶ *Ottawa Fire Insurance Plans*, 1912, volume 1, 38.

⁴⁷ Sally Coutts Heritage Consulting Inc., *Centretown and Minto Park Heritage Conservation District Plan*, 10, 49.

Response to Criterion

172 O'Connor Street is contextually linked to its surroundings as it contributes to the early apartment concentration in Ottawa in Central Centretown constructed before the First World War. Central Centretown was a suitable location for the intensification and accessible for those working downtown. Additionally, The Rothesay Apartment is visually linked to its surroundings for its proximity to several other historic walk-up apartment buildings. Finally, The Rothesay Apartments is functionally linked to its surroundings for its use as a multi-unit residential building from its opening in 1910 until 2024.

Supporting Details – Criterion 8

The Rothesay Apartments is contextually linked to its surroundings, being located within central Centretown with the highest density of apartments in Ottawa during the early to mid 20th century. The *Ottawa Journal* in 1907 documented upcoming construction of new apartment houses that spring and summer and that the idea of apartment houses has “caught on.”⁴⁸ Two years later, *The Ottawa Citizen* reported, “With the comparatively large number [of apartment houses] erected last year the opinion among those interested in real estate was, that the city had enough for a while. However, such was by no means the case,” mentioning the upcoming construction of 172 O'Connor Street.⁴⁹ In 1912, it was reported the significant number of apartments recent built and yet there were still waitlists for future units. By the advent of the First World War, 132 apartments are listed in the *Ottawa City Directories* with 71 located in Centretown and being the highest concentration of apartments in the city.⁵⁰ Peak apartment construction in Centretown occurred between the mid-1900s and 1930s, coinciding with the general real estate boom of the 1910s, and continued into the mid-20th century.⁵¹ The Rothesay Apartments fits within the pre-First World War and early walk-up apartment building stock.

⁴⁸ “The Erection of Apartment Houses,” *The Ottawa Journal*, April 9, 1907, accessed March 26, 2025, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/41974007/>.

⁴⁹ “Erecting Many Apartments,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, August 14, 1909, accessed March 26, 2025, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/455574226/>.

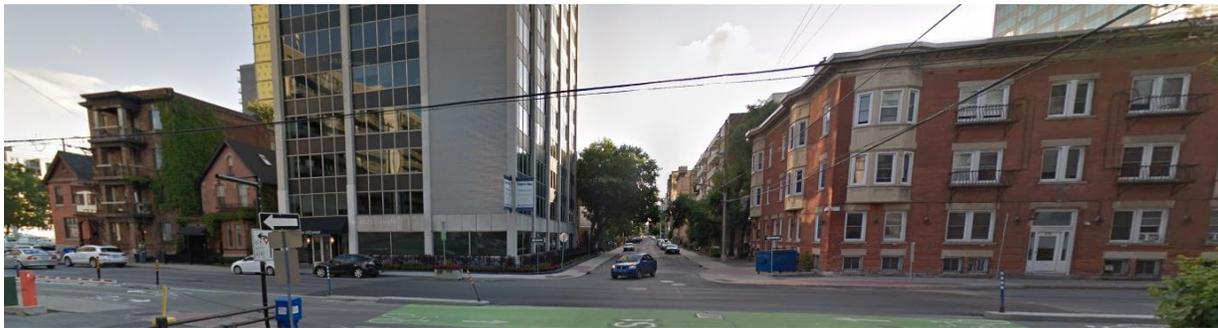
⁵⁰ *Ottawa City Directory*, 1914, 907-908; Julian Smith & Associates et al, *Centretown Heritage Conservation District Study*, 26, Supplementary B.

⁵¹ Robert Smythe, “Skyline: the early apartments of Centretown,” *Centretown Buzz*, May 14, 2016, <https://centretownbuzz.ca/2016/05/skyline-the-early-apartments-of-centretown/>.

Centretown as an urban, residential core suited the density increase of apartment buildings and allowed those employed downtown to walk to work. Central Centretown apartments range from low-rise traditional walk-ups with some levels of ornamentation, to mid-rise “H” or “U” shaped walk-ups architect designed referred to as a “Grande-Dame” (many located on Metcalfe Street and Elgin Street), to later modest modern and austere walk-ups. Many apartments are prominently located on corner lots providing multiple central entrances, demonstrated by The Rothesay Apartments, and the walk-up



O'Connor Street looking south from Gloucester Street, 110 Gloucester Street (far left), 155 O'Connor Street (centre left), 172 O'Connor Street (right background), Source: City of Ottawa, design made the buildings more accessible to the public.



O'Connor Street looking southwest from Nepean Street, 198 O'Connor Street (second from left) and 172 O'Connor Street (right), Source: Google Streetview, 2018

The Rothesay Apartment is also visually linked to its surroundings for its proximity to several other historic walk-up apartment buildings. Although the second half of the 20th century saw the demolition of several pre-First World War Central Centretown apartments with residential and commercial infill in, many are still present including many within proximity to 172 O'Connor Street. Within a block includes The Kenwood,

155 O'Connor Street (circa 1926), 110 Gloucester Street (circa 1912), 198 O'Connor Street (circa 1912-1922), and 88 Nepean Street (circa late 1920s).⁵²

Finally, 172 O'Connor Street's use has a multi-unit residential space has been consistent from its opening in 1910 until 2024.

The building operated as The Rothesay Apartments from 1910 until 1954 even after it was sold by the estate of the original owner, Edwin Clay Hayes in 1937 to J. Harold Shenkman.⁵³ J. Harold's father Wolf Shenkman was considered one of Ottawa's prolific real estate developers in the early to mid-20th century, especially during the 1930s.⁵⁴ J.



172 O'Connor Street, Source: *The Ottawa Citizen*, March 17, 1958,

Harold is credited with expanding his father's real estate business in size and geographically.⁵⁵ He constructed apartment buildings in Centretown such as The Park Square, 425 Elgin Street⁵⁶ and managed other properties such as 172 O'Connor Street. From the late 1950s to mid-1980s, the property was rebranded as Murray Hall Apartments, still operating as a rooming house with 39 furnished units.⁵⁷ Unfortunately a fire in 1958 temporarily displacing a hundred tenants, however the exterior appears to have been minimally affected.⁵⁸ Following, the building was used as a bed and breakfast, the O'Connor House from 1988 to 1993.⁵⁹ Finally for three decades from 1994 to 2024, 172 O'Connor Street served as the Cornerstone Housing for Women, providing emergency shelter services.⁶⁰

⁵² GeoOttawa, Heritage Register.

⁵³ "Four Property Deals Involve About \$56,000," *The Ottawa Citizen*, October 27, 1937, accessed March 26, 2025, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/456708426/>.

⁵⁴ Ryan, "A Wolf on Elgin Street (The Park Square apartments at 425 Elgin)."

⁵⁵ "The Shenkman Family," *The Ottawa Jewish Archives*, August 18, 2014, <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=758845494157216&id=511081938933574&set=a.511230882252013>.

⁵⁶ Ryan, "A Wolf on Elgin Street (The Park Square apartments at 425 Elgin)."

⁵⁷ "100 Flee Fire In O'Connor Apartments," *The Ottawa Journal*, December 30, 1958, accessed April 3, 2025, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/50274604/>; "Rooming Houses," *The Ottawa Citizen*, March 17, 1986, accessed April 3, 2025, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464699419/>.

⁵⁸ "Pre-Dawn Fire Ruins Block; Loss \$250,000; 47 Homeless," *The Ottawa Citizen*, December 30, 1958, accessed April 3, 2025, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/456935808/>.

⁵⁹ "Directory to Bed & Breakfast Accommodation in Ottawa Area," *The Ottawa Citizen*, June 25, 1988, accessed April 3, 2025, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/463657070/>; "Bed & Breakfast," *The Ottawa Citizen*, January 29, 1993, accessed April 3, 2025, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/464627087/>.

⁶⁰ Cornerstone/Le Pilier Housing for Women, *2013 Annual Report 30 Year Anniversary Edition*, accessed April 10, 2025, https://cornerstonewomen.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/2013_Annual_Report.pdf; Ted Raymond, "Cornerstone Housing for Women moving to bigger location," *CTV News*, April 10, 2024, accessed April 10, 2025, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/ottawa/article/cornerstone-housing-for-women-moving-to-bigger-location/>.

Criterion 9	
The property has contextual value because it is a landmark	No
Response to Criterion	
<p>172 O'Connor Street does not have contextual value as a landmark. The building is prominently situated on a corner lot yet its streets O'Connor and Nepean are not main thoroughfares in Centretown compared to Bank Street and Metcalfe Streets, which likely made it a suitable to be conveniently located but in a quieter section of the neighbourhood. The building does retain its original appearance and would be recognizable to many local residents; however, its common architectural style and its low massing contributes to the building not having a landmark status.</p>	

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