

Subject: Designation of 300 Rochester Street under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*

File Number: ACS2025-PDB-RHU-0045

**Report to Built Heritage Committee on December 9, 2025
and Council 28 January 2026**

**Submitted on November 28, 2025 by Court Curry, Director, Right of Way, Heritage,
and Urban Design Services, Planning, Development and Building Services**

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Ward: Somerset (14)

Objet : Désignation du 300, rue Rochester en vertu de la Partie IV de la *Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario*

Dossier : ACS2025-PDB-RHU-0045

Rapport au Comité du patrimoine bâti

le 9 décembre 2025

et au Conseil le 28 janvier 2026

**Soumis le 28 novembre 2025 par Court Curry, Directeur, Services des emprises,
du patrimoine, et du design urbain, Direction générale des services de la
planification, de l'aménagement et du bâtiment**

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REPORT RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Built Heritage Committee recommend that Council issue a Notice of Intention to Designate 300 Rochester Street under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* according to the Statement of Cultural Heritage Value attached as Document 5.

RECOMMANDATION(S) DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité du patrimoine bâti recommande au Conseil municipal de publier un avis d'intention de désigner la propriété située au 300, rue Rochester, 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 ci-jointe (document 5).

BACKGROUND

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

The property located at 300 Rochester Street was built in 1966 and is comprised of three separate buildings integrated by a common podium. The building was constructed as the High School of Commerce and is now used as the Adult High School. The property is currently owned by the Ottawa Carleton District School Board. The property has cultural heritage value for its design, associative, historical, and contextual values. It meets five of the nine criteria for designation under Part IV of the *OHA*.

This property was listed on the City's Heritage Register in 2019. Changes to the *OHA* through Bill 23 (2023) and Bill 200 (2024) will result in the removal of this property from the City's Heritage Register if Council does not issue a Notice of Intention to Designate the property by January 1, 2027. Further, Council will not be able to relist the property for five years after this date. Heritage staff completed a review of all non-designated properties listed on the City's Heritage Register in response to Bill 23 in Spring of 2023 and 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 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:

- 4.6(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 5 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 300 Rochester Street meets five of the nine criteria. Detailed research and analysis are outlined in the Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report (see Document 4), 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.

300 Rochester Street has design value as a representative example of a Modernist school. The building embodies Modernist architectural philosophy and demonstrates it stylistically in its use of concrete, glass, and its repetitive and rectilinear forms. As a Modernist school, it represents an ambitious and complete departure from traditional school architecture, both in form and materiality. The building, spanning a city block, features three pavilions atop a shared podium. The classroom and library pavilions demonstrate elements of the International Style, including an emphasis on clean lines and vertical elements. The classroom pavilion features floor-to-ceiling rectangular windows supported by columns. The auditorium pavilion incorporates a large blank façade, reflecting the Modernist philosophy of functional design.

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.

Constructed in 1966 as a purpose-built commerce high school, 300 Rochester Street has historical and associative value because it has direct associations with the evolution of the school system in Ontario following the Second World War. The post-war period marked an era of prosperity and population growth in Ontario, with educational policy and funding directed towards building commerce high schools to prepare the growing workforce.

The property also has associative value for its direct association with urban renewal in Ottawa. The development of 300 Rochester Street was the anchor project to the Preston Street Renewal Plan, which was among the most significant and costly urban renewal projects in the city. Post-war urban renewal was a trend across North America to redevelop areas that were seen as blighted. Today, the negative impacts of urban renewal are seen to include social displacement and the loss of historic neighbourhood fabric.

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.

300 Rochester Street has the potential to yield information that contributes to an understanding of Ottawa's Italian community, the community of West Centretown, and Ottawa's newcomer community. The expropriations and construction of 300 Rochester Street resulted in the permanent displacement of members of Ottawa's Italian community and other West Centretown residents. The displacements mark an important, albeit negative, event in the communities' histories. Since 1990, the property has been the Adult High School, which has strong connections with Ottawa's newcomer community as newcomers have long made up the majority of the student body.

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.

300 Rochester Street has historical value because it demonstrates the work of Sidney Lithwick, a prolific twentieth century architect who lived and worked in Ottawa. Lithwick's firm was responsible for several high-profile institutional projects, including the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO). Lithwick's firm also designed many secondary schools during the mid-twentieth century.

The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.

300 Rochester Street has contextual value as a landmark due to its prominent location near major transportation corridors, and due to the high visibility of the distinct Modernist architectural features of the classroom and auditorium pavilions.

Conclusion

The property at 300 Rochester Street 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 implications associated with implementing the report recommendation.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)

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

CONSULTATION

The property owner was notified by email regarding the proposed designation of their property under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* on September 29, 2025. Staff offered to meet with the property owner to address any questions or concerns.

A second email was sent to the property owner on November 3, 2025, and November 4, 2025, regarding additional details on the property's cultural heritage value, and on how the owner could participate in the Built Heritage Committee meeting.

Staff reached out to the property owner for a third time on November 20, 2025 to offer a meeting to discuss the proposed Statement of Cultural Heritage Value and answer any questions about the designation.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

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

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no asset management implications resulting from the recommendations in this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no rural implications.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 Location Map

Document 2 Photos

Document 3 Ontario Regulation 9/06

Document 4 Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report

Document 5 Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

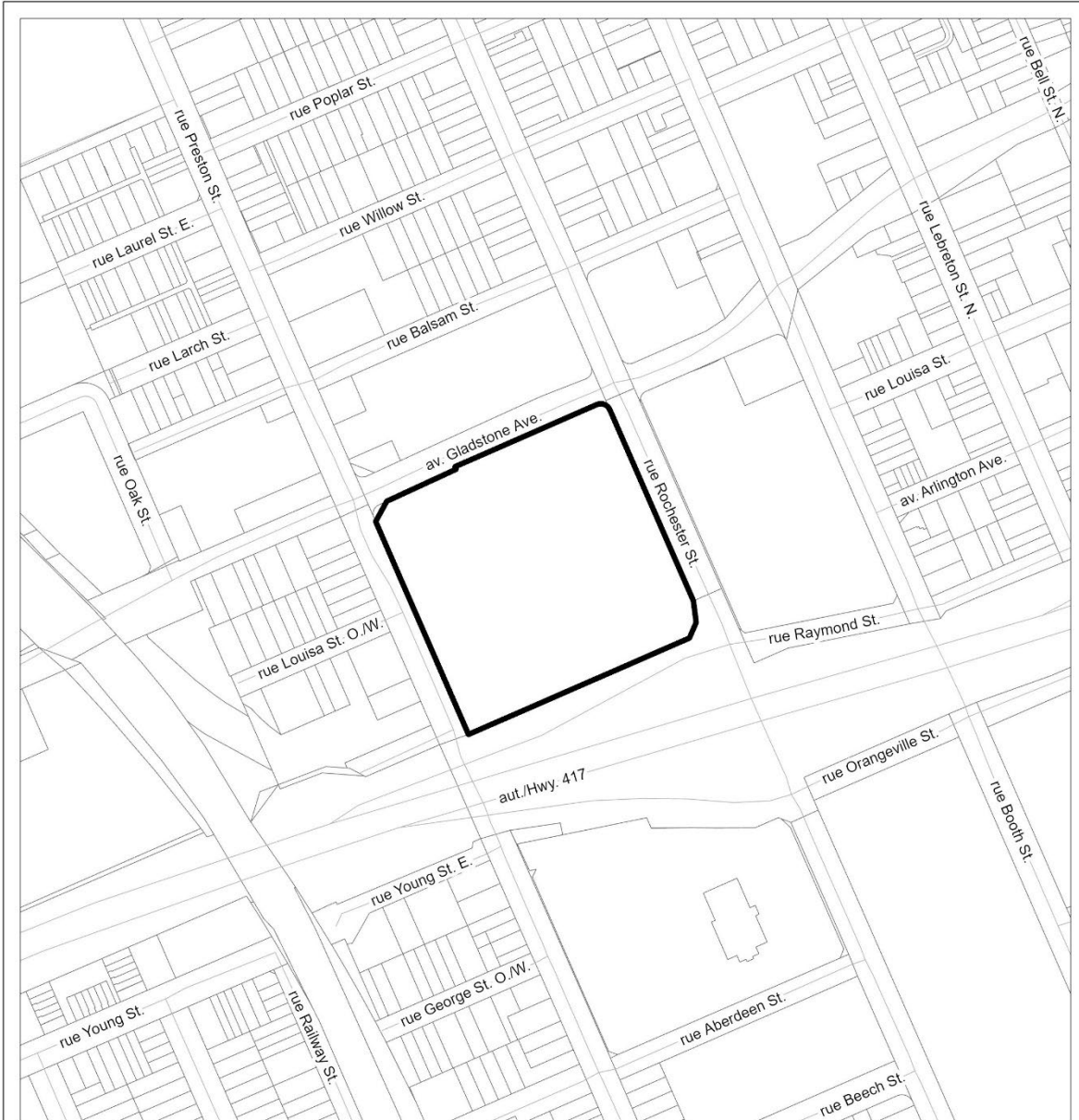
DISPOSITION


If Council does not carry the recommendation, no further steps are required. If Council proceeds with the issuance of a Notice of Intention to Designate for the property located at 300 Rochester Street, several actions must be taken:

- 1) Heritage Planning Branch, Planning, Development and Building Services Department, to prepare the Notice of Intention to Designate. Office of the City Clerk, Council and Committee Services to notify the property owner and the Ontario Heritage Trust (10 Adelaide Street East, 3rd Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M5C 1J3) of Council's decision to issue a Notice of Intention to Designate the property at 300 Rochester Street under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- 2) Heritage Planning Branch, Planning, Development and Building Services Department to ensure publication of the Notice of Intention to Designate according to the requirements of Section 29 the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- 3) If the City Clerk receives a Notice of Objection under Section 29(5) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* within thirty days of the publication of the Notice of Intention to Designate, the Heritage Planning Branch, Planning, Development and Building Services Department is to prepare a report regarding the objection for consideration by Council within 90 days after conclusion of the objection period, according to Section 29 (6) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- 4) If the City Clerk does not receive any Notice of Objection under Section 29 (5) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* within thirty days of the publication of the Notice of Intention to Designate, or if City Council decides not to withdraw the notice of intention to designate the property after an objection has been served, the Heritage Planning Branch, Planning, Development and Building Services Department is to prepare the designation by-law, under the authority of the approval of this report and Legal Services to submit to City Council for enactment within 120 days of the publication of the Notice of Intention to Designate as prescribed in Section 29(8) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- 5) Office of the City Clerk, Council and Committee Services to cause a copy of the by-law together with a statement explaining the cultural heritage value or interest of the property and a description of the heritage attributes of the property, to be served on the owner of the property and on the Trust according to the requirements of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Heritage Planning Branch, Planning,

Development and Building Services Department to ensure publication of the notice of the by-law in the newspaper according to the requirements Section 29(8)(4) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Document 1 – Location Map



	
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<small>©Les données de parcelles appartiennent à Teramet Enterprises Inc. et à ses fournisseurs. Tous droits réservés. Ne peut être reproduit sans autorisation. CECI N'EST PAS UN PLAN D'ARPENTAGE</small>	
REVISION / RÉVISION - 2025 / 09 / 02	

LOCATION MAP / PLAN DE LOCALISATION
HERITAGE / PATRIMOINE

 **300 rue Rochester St.**



Document 2 – Photos



Auditorium Detail (East Façade) (Source: City of Ottawa, 2025)



Classroom Detail (East and North Façades) (Source: City of Ottawa, 2025)



North Façade (Source: City of Ottawa, 2025)



West Façade (Source: City of Ottawa, 2025)



Library Pavilion (Source: City of Ottawa, 2025)



Auditorium Interior – Mosaic Detail (Source: City of Ottawa, 2025)



Auditorium Interior (Source: City of Ottawa, 2025)



Auditorium Interior – Balcony Detail (Source: City of Ottawa, 2025)



Auditorium Interior – Balcony Detail 2 (Source: City of Ottawa, 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:

2. 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.
3. The properties have design value or physical value because they display a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.
4. The properties have design value or physical value because they demonstrate a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. The properties have contextual value because they define, maintain or support the character of the district.
9. The properties have contextual value because they are physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to each other.
10. 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



Executive Summary

300 Rochester Street is the site of the Adult High School, formerly the High School of Commerce. Built in 1966, the Adult High School is located on a parcel of approximately 2.7 hectares.¹ It is comprised of three separate pavilions integrated by a common podium. The three pavilions rising from the podium are an auditorium, classroom facilities, and a library. The podium is at grade on the east side of the site facing Rochester Street, and two storeys high on the west side. The southeastern portion of the site is occupied by surface parking while the eastern portion features a sports field.

The architect was Lithwick, Lambert, Sim and Johnston.²

300 Rochester Street is located in Little Italy, which is within Ottawa's West Centretown neighbourhood in Ward 14.³ The property is situated immediately north of Highway 417, and is bounded by Rochester Street on the east, Gladstone Avenue on the north, and Preston Street on the west.

The building was an anchor of the Preston Street Urban Renewal Plan, a significant and early urban renewal project in Ottawa which took place in the mid-1960s.⁴

300 Rochester Street 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*.

¹ The Ottawa Journal, "Patten Returning for Ceremony" August 25, 1966, Page 30.

² The Ottawa Citizen, "Proposed new High School of Commerce" August 30, 1965, Page 5.

³ "Centretown West," Neighbourhood Heritage Statement, City of Ottawa, 2018.

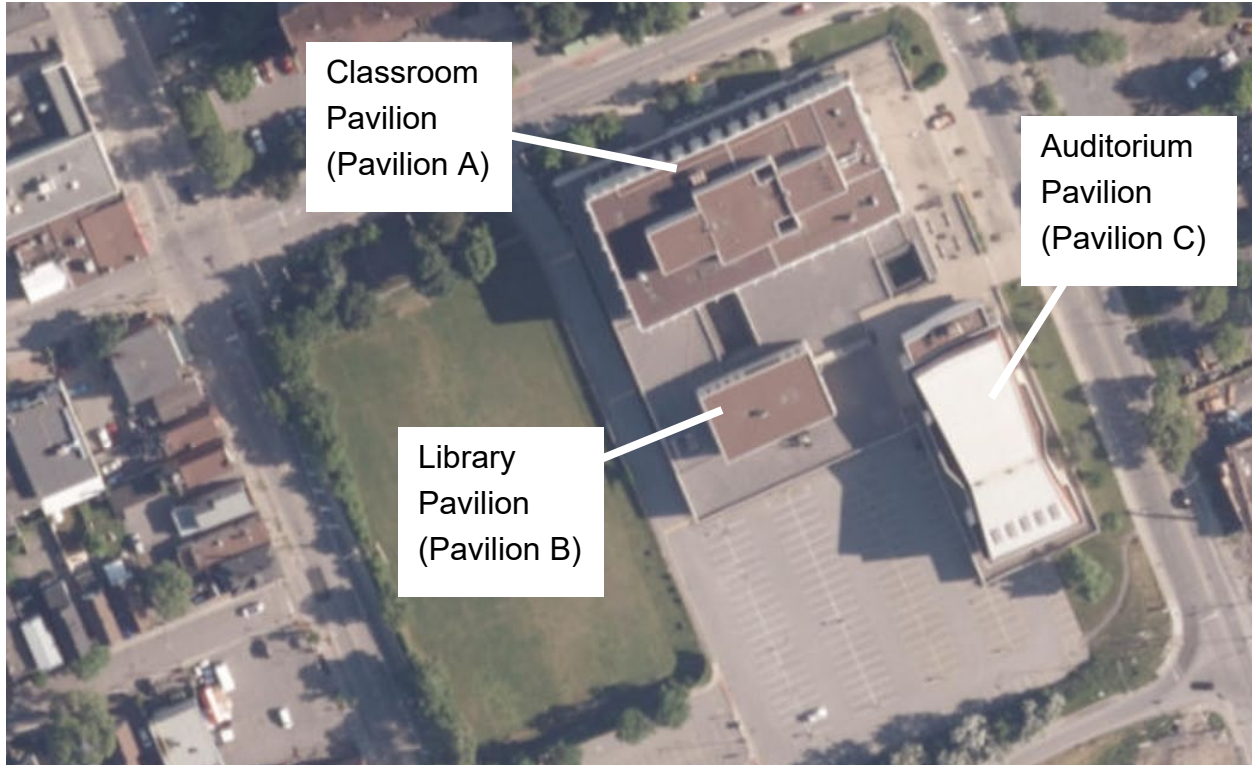
⁴ The Ottawa Journal, "Gov't Pledges City Plan Aid," December 14, 1963, Page 1.

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 300 Rochester Street has design value as a representative example of a Modernist school. Popular in Canada from the 1940s until the 1970s, Modernism was a worldwide movement in architecture that reflected a break from the highly ornamental and decorative styles of the past. It rejected ornamentation in favour of highly functional, rational, and structurally innovative designs. The building at 300 Rochester Street reflects the Modernist style, in its use of concrete and glass, limited ornamentation and its repetitive and rectilinear forms. As a Modernist school, it represents an ambitious and complete departure from traditional school architecture, both in form and materiality. The building, spanning a city block, features three distinct pavilions; the auditorium, classroom and library on a shared podium. The pavilions are visible atop the shared podium from the west elevation while they appear as stand-alone buildings from the east elevation.</p>	

Supporting Details – Criterion 1

Architectural Overview

300 Rochester Street is a representative example of a Modernist educational campus illustrating elements of the International Style. The design of the school represents an ambitious and complete departure from traditional school architecture, both in form and materiality. The building, spanning a city block, features three distinct pavilions that are visible atop a shared podium from the west elevation, while they appear as stand-alone buildings from the east elevation.



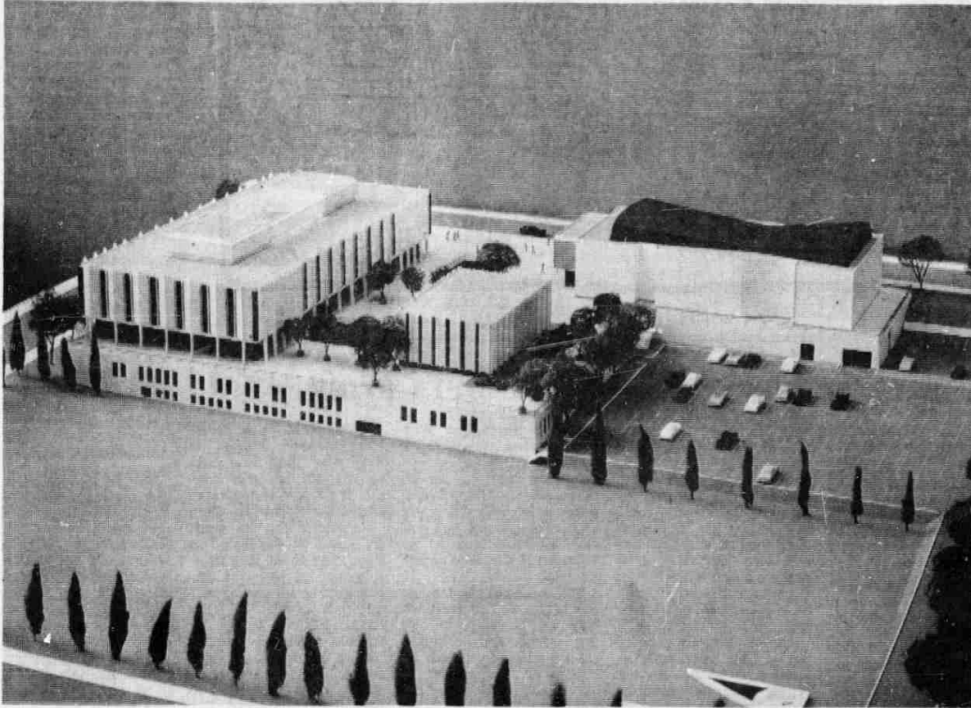
Location of the pavilions at 300 Rochester Street (Source: City of Ottawa, 2022)

The buildings are primarily made of concrete with variation in finishes between the podium and pavilions. The classroom and library pavilions demonstrate International Style elements, including an emphasis on clean lines and vertical elements. The classroom pavilion features a cast concrete facade with a stucco finish, as well as floor-to-ceiling, regularly spaced rectangular windows supported by cast concrete fins. The classroom pavilion also includes grey slate tile and brown enameled pressed steel accents.

The library pavilion includes a concrete façade with a pattern of precast concrete fins, as well as a brown ceramic tile mosaic above the entrance. The interior features high ceilings and a mezzanine.

The auditorium pavilion incorporates a large blank façade of precast concrete panels reflecting the Modernist philosophy of functional design. The façade also features grey slate tile accents and a butterfly roof with hidden clerestory windows. The interior of the auditorium features a large, cantilevered balcony, mosaic, and decorative brickwork.

The western façade of the podium is more utilitarian, featuring smaller rectangular windows. The façade of the classroom pavilion also projects prominently above.



Architectural model of the school at 300 Rochester Street (Source: Ottawa Citizen, 1965)

There have been negligible minor alterations to the building since its construction.

Modernism

Modernism was a philosophical movement that influenced many fields during the twentieth century. It resulted in a distinct architectural style whose use was widespread around the world. Modernism was popularized in Europe and North America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and, and in Ontario between the 1930s and 1960s.⁵ The movement was a rejection of earlier eclectic styles with historical references and instead focused on the idea of progress.⁶ Modernist architects were driven by the philosophy functional follows design, meaning that a building should primarily be based on its intended purpose.⁷ This resulted in the rejection of ornamentation in favour of highly functional, rational, and structurally innovative designs.⁸ Newly available materials were often used, including thin or reinforced concrete, steel frames, and the greater emphasis of glass.⁹ Modernism was used for a range of architectural applications from residential, commercial, to schools and other institutional buildings. Stylistically, Modernism often varied and resulted in various derivative styles; however, in general, Modernist buildings

5 Katherine McLaughlin, "Modern Architecture: Everything You Need to Know," Architectural Digest, July 26, 2023, accessed August 21, 2025, <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/modern-architecture-101>.

6 William J. R. Curtis, *Modern Architecture Since 1900* (Phaidon, 1996), 11.

7 McLaughlin, "Modern Architecture: Everything You Need to Know."

8 "Modernism," Royal Institute of British Architects, accessed August 21, 2025, <https://www.architecture.com/explore-architecture/modernism>

9 McLaughlin, "Modern Architecture: Everything You Need to Know."

featured predominantly rectilinear forms. Square or oblong blocks were often used with symmetrical projections and repeating patterns.¹⁰

A major derivative style of Modernism is the International Style. The International Style is an architectural style that developed in the 1930s and was known for its international extent and freedom from regional design differences.¹¹ The style was also known for using flat roofs. Highly optimized, minimal personal expressions, stainless steel mullions, and extensive use of glass.¹²

The building at 300 Rochester Street embodies Modernist architectural philosophy and demonstrates it stylistically, in terms of its materiality of concrete, glass, and its repetitive or rectilinear forms. The classroom and library pavilions demonstrate International Style elements, including an emphasis on clean lines and vertical elements. The classroom pavilion features floor-to-ceiling rectangular windows supported by columns.



Classroom detail at 300 Rochester Street (Source: City of Ottawa, 2025).

Modernist School

¹⁰ Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), Page 235.

¹¹ Michael J. Lewis, *American Art and Architecture*. (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 2006), Page 322.

¹² *Ibid.*, Pages 230, 259, 260.

Schools represent a distinct architectural typology, and the prevalence of Modernist school designs has established them as a typology in their own right. As with other Modernist architecture, Modernist schools were concerned with access to light and air, but new concepts such as open-air schools reflected new theories of child development and democratization of education. Modernist schools built following the Second World War often included a strong relationship with the outside, in forms such as courtyards, balconies, or partially enclosed yards. The overall building heights were generally low, even in urban areas.¹³

Modernist styles began to be introduced to schools in Canada following the Second World War. Historians have attributed a particular uptake of Modernism in school planning due to ideological shifts in pedagogy emphasizing transparency and functionalism.¹⁴ Proponents of Modernist architecture felt that Modernist planning and progressive pedagogy embodied democratic values of self-determination and collective living.¹⁵

Major policy documents were written that influenced educational policy in Ontario. For example, the Hope Report, an extensive five-year study that was created by the provincial government beginning in 1945, spoke to the traditional brick and schools of the past as obsolete for modern educational purposes. They instead emphasized a new school focused on good lighting, heating and ventilation. Earlier studies spoke to the need for standardized and modular school designs. Sections were dedicated to building designs that would prevent "undesirable angles", light obstruction, and glare.¹⁶

The Hope Report also spoke to anxieties from a rapid growth in population and immigration following the Second World War; it was thought that progressive reform, including in changes to architectural design, could help to better society.

Many examples of Modernist schools can be found across Ontario. There is often a high degree of variety of forms amongst Modernist schools. One Modernist Ontario school with similarities to 300 Rochester Street is the Davisville Public School in Toronto (demolished).

¹³ Theodore H. M. Prudon, *Preservation of Modern Architecture*, illustrated ed. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008), 328-336.

¹⁴ Jessie Gamarra, "Building Citizens for Tomorrow: Postwar School Design in Ontario," *Render: Graduate Journal of Art & Culture* (Carleton University), Volume 6 (2018), Page 2.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Page 7.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Pages 12-14.



Davisville Public School in Toronto (demolished) (Source: Toronto Modern, 2016 <https://robertmoffatt115.wordpress.com/2016/05/03/new-life-for-the-old-school/>)



Davisville Public School in Toronto (demolished) (Source: Toronto Modern, 2016 <https://robertmoffatt115.wordpress.com/2016/05/03/new-life-for-the-old-school/>)

Other Modernist high schools were developed in Ottawa, often also designed by Lithwick, Lambert, Sim and Johnston. Notable examples include the former Sir John A. MacDonald High School, now the St. Paul Catholic High School at 2675 Draper Avenue. The school includes the extensive use of concrete, and large repetitive windows. Champlain High School, now the Centre Jules- Léger at 281 Lanark Avenue, includes large spandrel windows and an emphasis on rectangular forms, though with a more traditional materiality. The école secondaire de la Salle in Lowertown was also

part of an urban renewal project and is similar to 300 Rochester Street in terms of its scale and distinctive elements, however, the materiality still relies on conventional materials like red brick. A later experimental school was St. Patrick's High School at 2525 Alta Vista Drive, originally designed by Schoeler, Heaton, Harvor, Menendez in 1972 as the école secondaire Charlebois. Its façade features the extensive use of metal panels.¹⁷



St. Patrick's High School at 2525 Alta Vista Drive (Source: Google Maps, 2014)



Sir John A. MacDonald High School, now the St. Paul Catholic High School at 2675 Draper Avenue. (Source: Google Maps, 2024).

¹⁷ Capital Modern. "St. Patrick's High School." Capital Modern: Modern Places. Accessed August 26, 2025. <https://www.capitalmodern.ca/modern-places/st-patricks-high-school/>.

The High School of Commerce, is one of the most ambitious and experimental of these schools, representing a complete departure from traditional school architecture.¹⁸¹⁹ The school at 300 Rochester Street was also among the costliest, and was criticized for its use of what was considered lavish materials, and building features such as the sunken gardens.²⁰ ²¹



Detail of the Auditorium at 300 Rochester Street (Source: City of Ottawa, 2025.)



¹⁸ Capital Modern, "Centre Jules Leger," Capital Modern, accessed August 5, 2025, <https://capitalmodern.ca/modern-places/centre-jules-leger/>.

¹⁹ Capital Modern, "Ridgemont High School," Capital Modern, accessed August 5, 2025, <https://www.capitalmodern.ca/modern-places/ridgemount-high-shchool/>.

²⁰ The Ottawa Citizen, "School price boost shocks controllers," September 8, 1964, Page 1.

²¹ The Ottawa Journal, "Bennett Hits CIB Spending," April 21, 1965, Page 3.

Centre Jules-Léger at 281 Lanark Avenue. (Source: Google Maps, 2021)

Modernist Campus and Post-Secondary Institutions



Conestoga College, Waterloo Campus (Source: Google Maps, 2009)

Modernist schools were not limited to primary and secondary institutions. Many Modernist post-secondary institutions were built across Canada as well. One example is the Conestoga College, Waterloo Campus, originally known as the Laurel Vocational School. Its façade, which has since been heavily altered, contains similarities to the patterns and fins used on the classroom pavilion at 300 Rochester Street.²² Another example is the Science and Humanities Wings of then Scarborough College (now the Andrews Building at the University of Toronto Scarborough) was noted as a radical departure from conventional campus architecture. Its design was not shaped by tradition, but by a desire to address functional needs, location, and the needs of its users.²³

²² Samantha Beattie, “The Story Behind the Architecture of Conestoga’s Waterloo Campus,” *Waterloo Chronicle*, March 20, 2017, <https://www.waterloochronicle.ca/news/the-story-behind-the-architecture-of-conestogas-waterloo-campus/>.

²³ Ontario Association of Architects. “Andrews Building, UTSC.” OAA BLOAAg. Accessed August 25, 2025. <https://www.oaa.on.ca>



John Andrews Building at the University of Toronto Scarborough (Source: Ontario Association of Architects, n.d.)

300 Rochester Street is more monumental and complex in comparison to most other Modernist secondary schools in Ontario. Standing atop the podium and seeing the three pavilions rising above, it evokes a campus-like setting, such as that of Carleton University's quad with distinctive Modernist buildings throughout.

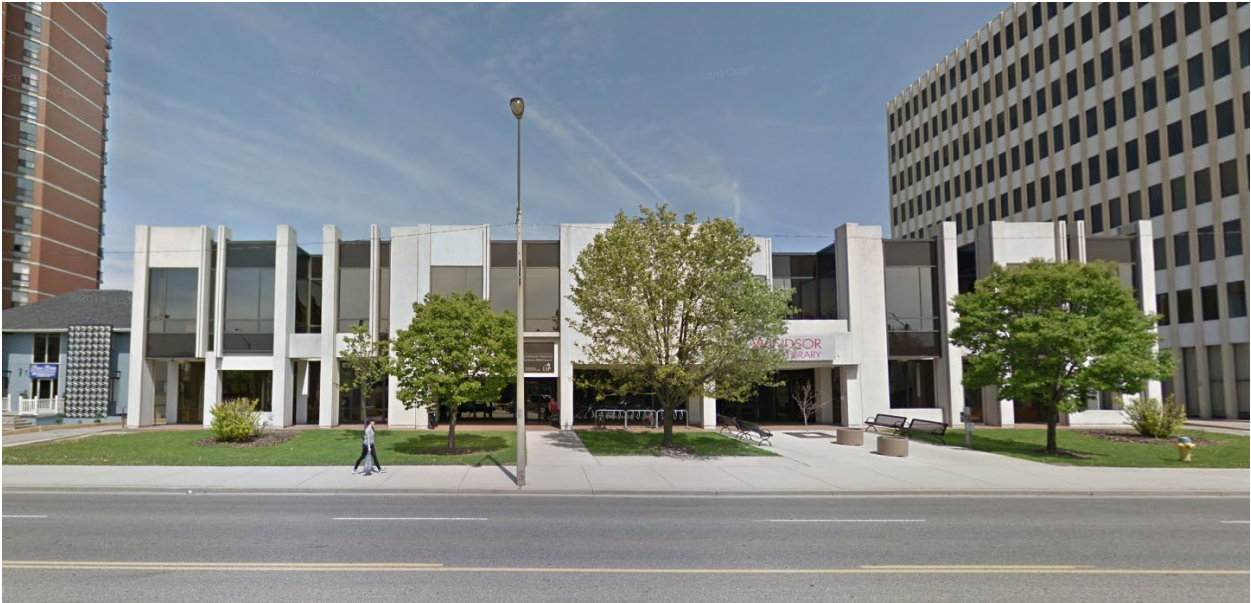


Carleton University Main Quad. (Source: Capital Modern: [Carleton University Main Quad Capital Modern](#))

Other Modernist Institutional Buildings

The site contains similarities with other large institutional buildings developed in Ottawa at a similar time, such as many of the buildings at Confederation Heights, Tunney's Pasture, and National Research Council Montreal Road Campus.

Many other Modernist Institutional buildings were constructed in Ontario displaying similarities to some aspects of 300 Rochester Street. For example, the former Windsor Public Library at 850 Ouellette Avenue, Windsor, displays similarities to the classroom pavilion in terms of its materiality and verticality.



Former Windsor Public Library at 850 Ouellette Avenue (Source: Google Maps, 2015).

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 including fire insurance plans 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 craftsmanship and artistic merit for 300 Rochester Street is typical of the building's construction era and type. As such, the property does not meet this criterion.	

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	

The building at 300 Rochester Street represented a significant investment for the Collegiate Institute Board of Ottawa. The school was equipped with state-of-the-art equipment and musical instruments. For example, the school included a novel data-processing computer, as well as what was considered possibly the most modern art facilities in Canada at the time.²⁴ Nonetheless, the construction of the school itself was not known to have demonstrated a uniquely 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	
<p>300 Rochester Street has historical and associative value because it has direct associations with urban renewal in Ottawa and the evolution of the school system in Ontario following the Second World War. Constructed in 1966 as a purpose-built commerce high school, the property has associative value with the theme of pedagogical change in Ontario following the Second World War. The post-war period marked an era of prosperity and population growth, with educational policy and funding directed towards building commercial high schools to prepare the growing workforce. In addition, the development of 300 Rochester Street was the anchor project to the Preston Street Renewal Plan, which was among the most significant and costly urban renewal projects in Ottawa. Post-war urban renewal was a trend across North America to redevelop areas that were seen as blighted. Today, the negative impacts of urban renewal are seen to include social displacement and the loss of historic neighbourhood fabric.</p>	

Supporting Details – Criterion 4

Urban Renewal

300 Rochester Street represents a prominent legacy of Ottawa’s urban renewal projects during the mid-twentieth century.

After the Second World War and into the 1960s, suburbanization increased and an exodus from the inner city was seen, resulting in a perceived deterioration in many urban cores in Canada. During this period, the Canada Mortgage and Housing

²⁴ The Ottawa Journal, “New Commerce High School – Bold, Gleaming, Unique” April 14, 1967, Page 21.

Corporation (CMHC) introduced urban renewal programs in which funding was provided to tear down rather than fix existing housing.²⁵

Post-war urban renewal was a trend across North America to redevelop areas that were seen as blighted. Today, the negative impacts of urban renewal are seen to include social displacement and the loss of historic neighbourhood fabric. Urban renewal projects were often undertaken in working class communities or areas with a significant linguistic or ethnic minority population. Neighbourhoods were reshaped through widespread expropriation and demolition of buildings, resulting in the displacement of communities. The most significant urban renewal projects in Ottawa included LeBreton Flats, Lowertown, and Preston Street. The Preston Street area was home to a large Italian population, while Lowertown and LeBreton Flats had large francophone populations.^{26 27}

The Preston Street Urban Renewal project is lesser-known in comparison to the nearby LeBreton Flats urban renewal, but it is significant in that it displaced approximately 1100 residents, many of whom were of Italian origin. This urban renewal project is also significant as there was less of a connection to the expansion of the federal public service. It was instead typical of other urban renewal projects in North America whereby so-called substandard housing was to be replaced with newer housing and institutions.²⁸ The study focused on the perceived sub-standard physical conditions of dwellings, lack of public services and inadequacies of the street system.²⁹

The Preston Street Renewal Plan was derived from a city-wide study undertaken by the City of Ottawa in partnership with the federal government in 1958 and updated and published in 1967. The study initially recommended urban renewal in 16 areas, though the number was later reduced to 12. In 1964, CMHC entered an agreement with the City to provide half the cost for acquiring and clearing a 6.76 ha area north of the 417, east of Preston Street, south of Balsam Street, and west of Booth Street. Following amendments to the *National Housing Act* in 1964, further funding for servicing was provided by the CMHC. In addition to residences, the area was home to many businesses. The Preston Street Renewal Plan initially sought to provide a mix of public and private housing to re-home some of the residents that were to be displaced alongside space for commercial uses; however, the plan was modified to replace the

²⁵ Barbara Wake Carroll, *Post-War Trends in Canadian Housing Policy*, *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine* 18, no. 1 (June 1989): 64, <https://doi.org/10.7202/1017825ar>.

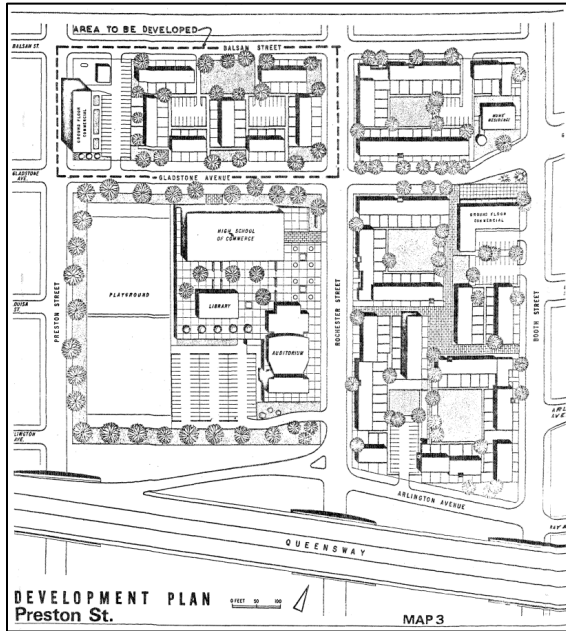
²⁶ Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, *Urban Renewal in Ottawa and Hull*, Architectural and Planning Division (February 1971), Page 3-4.

²⁷ Kenza Benali, "Le réaménagement des Plaines LeBreton : une occasion de 'rendre justice' à la communauté francophone d'Ottawa?," *Recherches sociographiques* 54, no. 1 (January–April 2013): 29–57, <https://doi.org/10.7202/1015207ar>.

²⁸ Barbara Wake Carroll, *Post-War Trends in Canadian Housing Policy*, *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine* 18, no. 1 (June 1989): 64, <https://doi.org/10.7202/1017825ar>.

²⁹ Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, *Urban Renewal in Ottawa and Hull*, Architectural and Planning Division (February 1971), Page 3.

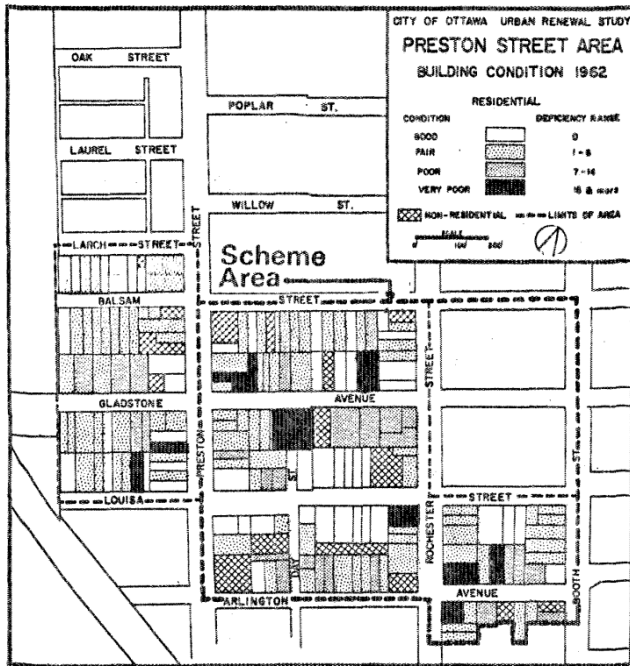
commercial site at the southwest corner of Gladstone and Booth with a park, and to include a seniors' residence and higher-density residential on the block immediately to the north of the school.³⁰



Preston Street Development Plan. (Source: CMHC, 1971).

The image below from the Preston Street Renewal Plan shows the study area, which included what is now 300 Rochester Street as well as surrounding blocks. The blocks to the north and east were also impacted by urban renewal, though the blocks to the west were left intact.

³⁰ Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, *Urban Renewal in Ottawa and Hull*, Architectural and Planning Division (February 1971).



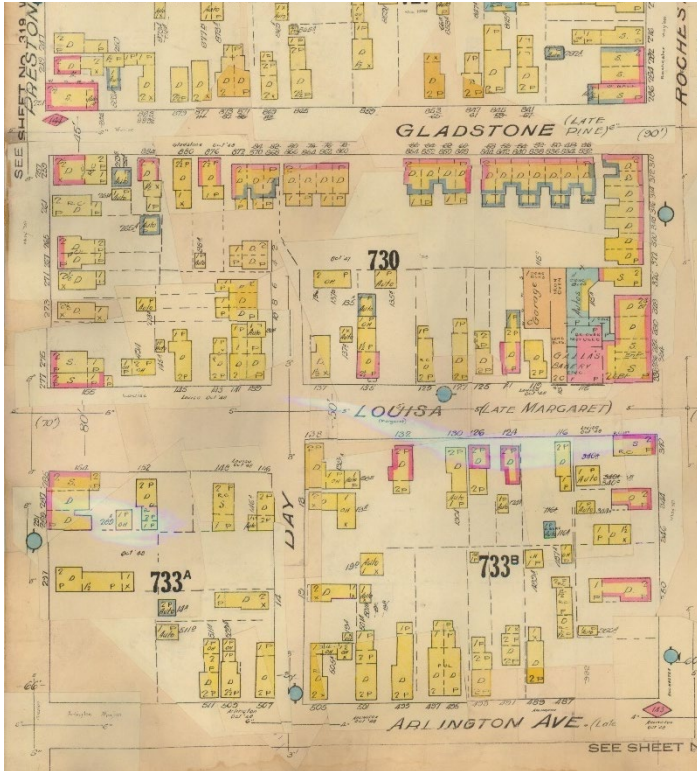
Building Condition Plan from the Preston Street Renewal Plan (Source: CMHC, 1971.)

The parcel for the school was one deliberately selected due to significant presence of houses with “structural deficiency” and “buildings crowded together with little useable public space”.³¹ The image from the 1948 Fire Insurance Plan below shows the significant number of homes and businesses that were demolished to make way for the school.

The implementation of the Preston Street Renewal Plan and development of 300 Rochester Street physically re-shaped the local road network. This has permanently changed the way the neighbourhood is navigated and experienced. Prior to its development, Arlington Avenue and Louisa Streets extended further west to Preston Street. A north-south street between Preston and Rochester also existed. Each of these streets were removed to allow for the development of 300 Rochester Street, which spanned the equivalent of four city blocks.³²

³¹ Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, *Urban Renewal in Ottawa and Hull*, Architectural and Planning Division (February 1971), Page 3.

³² Robert Haig, *Ottawa, City of the Big Ears: The Intimate, Living Story of a City and a Capital* (Ottawa: Haig and Haig Publications, 1970), Page 229.



1948 Fire Insurance Plan.



Image emphasizing the former road network. (Source: Ottawa Journal, 1963).

The Preston Street Renewal Plan was appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board (now the Ontario Land Tribunal) and approved in 1964. Some residents expressed objections regarding the addition of subsidized housing, while others voiced concerns regarding the compensation for 1100 people who were to be displaced.³³

³³ The Ottawa Journal, "Okay First Renewal Project" January 24, 1964, Page 1.

The effects of urban renewal in the neighbourhood were significant and permanent. Only a few years later in the 1970s, urban renewal programs had fallen out of favour due to the displacement and massive social and economic costs associated with it.³⁴



1958 aerial photograph of the blocks now occupied by 300 Rochester Street (Source: City of Ottawa, 1958).



Recent aerial photo showing the 300 Rochester Street and the changes to the road network. (Source: City of Ottawa, 2022).

³⁴ The Ottawa Journal, "Parcel of hope bears seeds of divisiveness" May 11, 1974, Page 7.

Urban renewal is an important theme in Ottawa's history in that it significantly re-shaped communities and displaced residents. The Preston Street Renewal Plan was one of the most significant urban renewal projects in Ottawa, and the building at 300 Rochester Street was its anchor project, enabled through funding by all three levels of government. The new High School of Commerce was thought to be the first high school in Canada constructed as part of an urban renewal project. In addition, given that the project was intended to include both private and public housing, it was thought to be the first private-public development partnership in Ontario, as well as the first urban renewal project in Ottawa.³⁵ The property has historical value and associative value because it has direct associations with urban renewal.

Secondary Schools in Ontario and the Robarts Plan

The history of the commerce secondary school in Ontario dates to the mid-nineteenth century. In the 1860s, commercial studies began to be introduced, with schools beginning to teach courses on subject such as bookkeeping and penmanship. Schools began to introduce commerce programs to schools, and by 1885, the Ministry of Education introduced a formal program of commerce studies.³⁶ There are various reasons for the introduction of commerce studies, but at a high level, the studies were a response to the economic demands of industrialized workplaces, as well as the educational needs from governments, workers, and employers.³⁷

The first commerce classes in Ottawa were offered at the Ottawa Collegiate Institute, now Lisgar Collegiate, in 1904. By 1915, a separate commerce program was created. In 1929, a high school of commerce was created as a separate school in what is now Glebe Collegiate Institute. The uptake of commerce education by local school boards and students was noted to be low in the early twentieth century, however, this changed significantly following the Second World War and especially during the 1960s. Funding priorities were directed towards commerce secondary education, and some historians posited this as a reaction to the perceived technological progress of the Soviet Union. In 1960s, the Government of Canada approved the Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act, which funded 75 per cent of the construction and equipment for technical and vocational facilities in 1960.³⁸ Ontario's Robarts Plan, named after Premier and former Minister of Education John Robarts, was created in response to this. The Robarts Plan resulted in a new secondary education structure whereby

³⁵ The Ottawa Journal, "New Look at Commerce." September 9, 1967, Page 8.

³⁶ R.D. Gidney and W.P.J. Millar, *Inventing Secondary Education: The Rise of the High School in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 291.

³⁷ Kathleen Yolande Sharman, "The Origins and the Significance of the Toronto Technical School, 1891–1904," *Journal of Technical Education and Training* 3, no. 1 (June 2011): 1–12, <https://www.itet.org/>.

³⁸ Dean Fink, *The Attrition of Change* (PhD diss., The Open University, 1997), Page 180.

students wishing to enter university would finish with grade 13, while students looking to enter technical and vocational fields would focus on these subjects in school and finish with grade 12. Students were required to make the decision early on.³⁹

In Ottawa, the High School of Commerce was relocated from its location in the Glebe to its new location at 300 Rochester Street. The new school was intended to accommodate a significant increase in students, and given that it was a commerce high school, 75% of the entire cost was paid by federal and provincial grants.⁴⁰ In 1966, the corner stone for the new High School of Commerce was laid, and in 1967, it was officially opened.⁴¹

A significant driver of the school's construction was concern about overcrowding at existing secondary schools.⁴² Capacity was a significant issue at multiple schools during this period, due to large increases in enrolment as a result of immigration and members of the baby boomer generation reaching school age.⁴³ For example, the contract for the Woodroffe High School, also completed by Lithwick's firm, was doubled in size to accommodate 1500 students.^{44 45}

Numerous other changes to Ontario's education system took place following the Robarts Plan; however, the streaming of students between academic and vocational programs continued. Criticism mounted that the streaming perpetuated class issues and occurred along gender, race, class, and ethnic lines. For a multitude of reasons, enrollment in commerce / vocational secondary schools on Ontario dropped off significantly between the 1970s and 1990s.⁴⁶ In 1986, an Adult High School program was introduced at 300 Rochester Street.⁴⁷ In 1990, the High School of Commerce's adolescent program was closed and its art program was transferred to Canterbury High School.⁴⁸

As a purpose-built commerce high school from the 1960s, the property has associative value with the theme of pedagogical change in Ontario following the Second World War.

³⁹ Dean Fink, *The Attrition of Change* (PhD diss., The Open University, 1997), Page 182.

⁴⁰ *The Ottawa Journal*, "Students Up Costs Too -Pullen." September 9, 1964, Page 1.

⁴¹ *Ottawa High School of Commerce, Argosy of Commerce, 1987* (Ottawa, ON: Ottawa High School of Commerce, 1987), Ottawa Public Library, Ottawa Room.

⁴² *The Ottawa Journal*, "New Commerce HS 'Bold New Venture'" January 11, 1964, Page 3.

⁴³ Jason F. Ieraci, *Pendulums and Paradigms: Education Reform in Ontario* (Master's thesis, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, 2006), Page 80.

⁴⁴ *The Ottawa Journal*, "Award Contract to Double Size" November 29, 1960, Page 11.

⁴⁵ *The Ottawa Journal*, "Laurier High School Opening Soon" October 26, 1965, Page 4.

⁴⁶ H. Smaller, *Vocational Education in Ontario Secondary Schools: Past, Present – and Future?*, in *Integrating School and Workplace Learning in Canada: Principles and Practices of Alternation Education and Training*, Pages 14-17 (2004).

⁴⁷ *The Ottawa Citizen*, "Welcome to Learning!" August 23, 1986, Page c7

⁴⁸ *The Ottawa Citizen*, "OBE to end regular courses at High School of Commerce!" May 8, 1990, Page f13.

The post-war period marked an era of prosperity and population growth, with educational policy and funding directed towards building and investing in commerce / vocational high schools to prepare the growing workforce. The construction of the school demonstrates the implementation of federal and provincial policy, which strongly encouraged the growth of commerce schools through the provision of grants to fund the majority of their construction.

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
Response to Criterion	
<p>The building at 300 Rochester Street has historical and associative value because it has the potential to yield information that contributes to an understanding of Ottawa's Italian community, the community of West Centretown, and Ottawa's newcomer community. The expropriations and construction of 300 Rochester Street resulted in the permanent displacement of members of Ottawa's Italian community and other West Centretown residents. The displacements mark an important, albeit negative, event in the communities' histories. An adult school program was introduced to the building in 1986, and since 1990, the property has been exclusively used as the Adult High School, which has strong connections with Ottawa's newcomer community as newcomers have long made up the majority of the student body.</p>	

Supporting Details – Criterion 5

The building at 300 Rochester Street is located within West Centretown, which is known as a community that has long been home to newcomers to Canada. Prior to the Second World War, the neighbourhood was predominantly French Canadian and Irish. Afterwards, the area significant numbers of Italian and Eastern Europe immigrants. In the 1970s and after, the area saw a growing population from Vietnamese and Chinese immigration. Italian businesses are centred along Preston Street while Italian cultural buildings are located on Booth Street and Gladstone Avenue.

Ottawa's Italian Community and the Residents of Little Italy and West Centretown

The development of 300 Rochester Street significantly affected a community that was known to include a large community of Italian origin, and contributes to an understanding of the community in Ottawa.

The second half of the nineteenth century saw the formation of a small Italian community in Ottawa. Many Italian immigrants settled in Lowertown alongside French, Jewish, and Irish families. Other Italians settled in Rochesterville along Rochester Street, Booth Street, and their side streets. Some Italians were canal workers, while many others worked as labourers or in blue collar professions. Ottawa's Italian community grew steadily during the early twentieth century. One gathering space that has long been significant to Ottawa's Italian community is St. Anthony's Church, which is located one block away from 300 Rochester Street, at the corner of Gladstone and Booth Streets.⁴⁹ Following the outbreak of the Second World War, many approximately 630 people of Italian origin were placed in internment camps in Canada, including five Ottawa men.⁵⁰ Following the Second World War, the rate of immigration increased significantly, with many families settling in West Centretown. When the displacement occurred in association with the Preston Street Renewal Plan, many residents did not qualify for housing and were unable to find other housing in their community. As a result, the community was fragmented and many residents moved to other areas, such as Nepean and Heron Park.⁵¹ A business significant to the Italian community that was lost as a result of the Preston Street Renewal Plan was Galla's Bakery at Louisa and Rochester. During the 1950s, Galla's Bakery employed over 150 people.⁵²

The expropriation of the residents and businesses, as well as the re-shaping of the local road network to create the building at 300 Rochester Street resulted in permanent changes to Ottawa's Little Italy and the Italian community. Although the events associated with the construction of the school are negative, they contribute to an understanding of the history of Ottawa's Italian community and the adversities they have faced.

⁴⁹ Fiona Story, "Founding a Community: The History of St. Anthony's Church," *Canada's Digital Collections Initiative*, Ottawa Italians, accessed August 21, 2025, <https://www.ottawaitalians.com/Community/stAnthonysChurch.htm>.

⁵⁰ Veterans Affairs Canada, "Piazza Dante Memorial Wall," *Veterans Affairs Canada*, last modified May 26, 2025, <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canada/ottawa/piazza-dante-memorial-wall>.

⁵¹ Musee Bytown Museum (2021). *Beyond Bytown: The History of Ottawa's Italian Community*. [online] Youtube. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ow0_mbwEAyg.

⁵² Giovanna Mingarelli, "Working for the Community: The Gallas Embrace the Meaning of Family," *Canada's Digital Collections Initiative*, Ottawa Italians, accessed August 21, 2025, <https://www.ottawaitalians.com/Community/gallaBakery.htm>.



Galla's Bakery, demolished as part of the Preston Street Renewal Plan (Source: Ottawa Italians)

Other Residents of West Centretown and Little Italy

Residents affected by the development of 300 Rochester Street were not limited to Ottawa's Italian community. Many other residents were of Ukrainian, English, French, or other origin. One notable structure that was demolished as part of the development was the Ottawa Ukrainian Temple at 523 Arlington Avenue.^{53 54}

Ottawa's Newcomer Community

The residences and businesses that existed on the site now known as 300 Rochester Street were often occupied by members of Ottawa's Italian community or other newcomer communities. After the forced displacement of the site, the High School of Commerce was constructed. The school did not immediately have a connection with Ottawa's newcomer community, however, a connection with Ottawa's newcomer community has resurfaced on the site through the Adult High School, which has been the sole occupant of the site since the High School of Commerce was closed in 1990.⁵⁵

The Adult High School has an extensive history of having newcomers to Canada make up a large portion of the student body. In 1995, newcomers made up more than 50% of the student body.⁵⁶ In 2025, more than 80% of the Adult High School's student body was composed of newcomers to Canada. In many cases, students already have a high

⁵³ Suzanne Holyck Hunchuck, *A House Like No Other: An Architectural and Social History of the Ukrainian Labour Temple, 523 Arlington Avenue, Ottawa, 1923–1967* (Master's thesis, Carleton University, 2001), <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14718/36121>.

⁵⁴ The Ottawa Citizen, "Our homes aren't slums." February 22, 1964, Page 23.

⁵⁵ The Ottawa Citizen, "OBE to end regular courses at High School of Commerce!" May 8, 1990, Page f13.

⁵⁶ The Ottawa citizen, "Changing times at Adult High." June 29, 1995. Page 15.

school diploma, or even university degrees, from abroad, but attend the school for local credentials or to improve their English language skills for the job market.⁵⁷

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.	Yes
Response to Criterion	
The building at 300 Rochester Street has historical value because it demonstrates the work of Sidney Lithwick, a prolific twentieth century architect who lived and worked in Ottawa. Lithwick's firm was responsible for several high-profile institutional projects, including the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO). Lithwick's firm also designed many secondary schools during the mid-twentieth century.	

Supporting Details – Criterion 6

300 Rochester Street was designed by Lithwick, Lambert, Sim and Johnston. This firm is known as the designer of many Ottawa high schools during the 1950s and 1960s.⁵⁸ The firm's name changed several times to correspond with changes in leadership since its founding in 1928 by A.J. Hazelgrove.⁵⁹ The firm was prolific in Ottawa, its predecessor led by Hazelgrove and Lithwick having most notably designed the Sir Charles Tupper Building in Confederation Heights. This building is a Recognized building by the Federal Heritage Review Office (FHRO).⁶⁰

Sidney Lithwick (1921-2008) was a licensed architect and built his career in Ottawa after graduating from McGill University's Bachelor of Architecture program.⁶¹ ⁶² Sidney was the son of Abraham and Dora Lithwick, who immigrated to Canada from Poland and Ukraine, respectively. The family operated a grocery store at 34 Byward Market

⁵⁷ Ottawa Morning with Rebecca Zandbergen, "The Ottawa Carleton District School Board's Adult High School Gears Up for Graduation Ceremony," CBC Listen, June 16, 2025, <https://www.cbc.ca/listen//live-radio/1-100-ottawa-morning/clip/16152680-the-ottawa-carleton-district-school-boards-adult-high>.

⁵⁸ Capital Modern, "Centre Jules Leger," Capital Modern, accessed August 5, 2025, <https://capitalmodern.ca/modern-places/centre-jules-leger/>.

⁵⁹ Library and Archives Canada, "Lithwick, Sidney fonds [architectural drawing]," accessed August 6, 2025, <https://recherche-collection-search.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/home/record?idnumber=3822499&app=fonandcol&ecopy=>

⁶⁰ Public Works and Government Services Canada, Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office Report: Sir Charles Tupper Building, accessed August 19, 2025, <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-services-procurement/services/infrastructure-buildings/federal-heritage-buildings.html>.

⁶¹ The Ottawa Journal, "Lithwick Labert Sim Johnston Moy Architects" August 28, 1976, Page 13.

⁶² Island Park Community Association, "Sidney Lithwick" Accessed August 7, 2025, <https://www.islandparkcommunityassociation.ca/team/sidney-lithwick>

Street and resided at 239 York Street. The family was known for their involvement in Ottawa's Jewish community.⁶³

Under his leadership, Lithwick's firm was responsible for several significant institutional buildings in Ottawa, including the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO).⁶⁴ and Lithwick was part of Ottawa's Jewish community, and his firm was also responsible for several synagogues, such as the Kehillat Beth Israel Synagogue on Coldrey Avenue.⁶⁵



Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO). (Source: Google Maps, 2017)



Beth Israel Synagogue at 1400 Coldrey Avenue. (Source: Google Maps, 2024).

⁶³ Jolson Lim, "Jewish Homes of Lowertown East on Clarence and York Streets," Lowertown Community Association Heritage Committee, 2016, Pages 15-16.

⁶⁴ The Ottawa Journal, "A hospital that's 'second to none'" May 16, 1974, Page 16.

⁶⁵ The Ottawa Journal, "Real Estate." August 21, 1954, Page 31.

⁶⁶ The Ottawa Journal, "200 Are Present For Reception." August 7, 1934, Page 17.

Lithwick's firm was also known for the design for several high schools in Ottawa, including the Ridgemont High School at 2597 Alta Vista Drive, Champlain High School (now the Centre Jules Leger) at 281 Lanark Avenue, the former Sir John A. MacDonald High School, now the St. Paul Catholic High School at 2675 Draper Avenue. These other schools often incorporated Modernist motifs while still using traditional building materials such as brick and fieldstone.^{67 68} The Draper Avenue school includes the extensive use of concrete, and large repetitive windows. Champlain High School, now the Centre Jules-Léger at 281 Lanark Avenue, includes large spandrel windows and an emphasis on rectangular forms, though with a more traditional materiality. Another high school created by the firm, perhaps the only rivalling 300 Rochester Street in terms of its ambition, is the école secondaire de la Salle in Lowertown. The de la Salle school was also part of an urban renewal project. It was also similar to 300 Rochester Street in terms of its scale and distinctive elements. However, like most of the other schools constructed by the firm, the materiality still relies on conventional materials like red brick.



École secondaire de la Salle (Source: Google Maps, 2014).

Lithwick also designed his family's residence at 385 Island Park Drive.

Together with Hazelgrove, Lithwick's firm was responsible for over 20 buildings in Ottawa, including schools, residential, commercial, and office buildings, as well as

⁶⁷ Capital Modern, "Centre Jules Leger," Capital Modern, accessed August 5, 2025, <https://capitalmodern.ca/modern-places/centre-jules-leger/>.

⁶⁸ Capital Modern, "Ridgemont High School," Capital Modern, accessed August 5, 2025, <https://www.capitalmodern.ca/modern-places/ridgemount-high-shchool/>.

places of worship. Many of these buildings were highly regarded architecturally and invoked Modernist elements.⁶⁹



International Harvester Co. Factory, Carling Avenue at Champagne Avenue, designed by Hazelgrove and Lithwick (demolished) (Source: Heritage Ottawa, 2014)



⁶⁹ "Hazelgrove, Albert James," Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada 1800–1950, accessed August 25, 2025, <https://www.dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/node/2577>.

Lithwick family residence at 385 Island Park Drive (Source: Google Maps, 2019)

Criterion 7	
The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.	No
<p>Response to Criterion</p> <p>The building at 300 Rochester Street is located within the West Centretown neighbourhood. Architecturally, West Centretown includes a mix of styles, however, housing built for the working class between 1900 and 1907 is predominant throughout the neighbourhood. This includes 2-storey brick-clad row houses and semi-detached homes, many of which featuring a vernacular Italianate style. West Centretown also includes institutional buildings that reflects the neighbourhood's French Catholic heritage, such as the Grey Nuns convent situated on Nanny Goat Hill.</p> <p>Although other Modernist and large-scale development can be found in West Centretown, these are not the predominant form and typology and in the broader area, therefore, the building at 300 Rochester Street does not define, maintain, or support the character of the area,</p>	

Criterion 8	
The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.	No
<p>Response to Criterion</p> <p>The property at 300 Rochester Street is historically linked to its surroundings through the Preston Street Urban Renewal Plan. Its construction re-shaped the local road network, thereby eliminating several streets to accommodate the large-scale school development. Nonetheless, these changes in themselves do not give rise to cultural heritage value or interest. Therefore, the building at 300 Rochester Street does not meet this criterion.</p>	

Criterion 9

The property has contextual value because it is a landmark	Yes
<p>Response to Criterion</p> <p>300 Rochester Street has contextual value as a landmark due to its prominent location near major transportation corridors, and due to the high visibility of the distinct Modernist architectural features of the classroom and auditorium pavilions.</p>	

Supporting Details – Criterion 9

300 Rochester Street is a local landmark, owing to its size and location. The site spans an entire city block, and its east façade is prominent for passers-by on Rochester Street. The architectural style of the classroom pavilion is especially unique and notable. In terms of location, 300 Rochester Street is prominent as it is found immediately north of on- and off-ramps to Highway 417. It is visible from Highway 417 and Rochester Street, which is a common route to enter Gatineau via the Chaudière Bridge. This is further emphasized by the building's relatively shallow setback compared to its height and modest landscaping. The property is highly visible from its north façade along Gladstone Avenue, which features a significant decrease in elevation from east to west.

In addition, the distinct Modernist architectural features contribute to its status as a landmark. In particular, the rectilinear volume atop the entryway to the auditorium pavilion is distinct. The prominent black mesh panel creates visual interest in contrast to the smooth concrete façade. The repetitive motifs of the classroom pavilion are also visually interesting. The prominent fins, which are intended to deflect sunlight, are distinct and highly visible from both Gladstone and Rochester.

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Document 5 – Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Description of Property

The Adult High School and former High School of Commerce at 300 Rochester Street is comprised of three separate pavilions on a shared podium. The property is located within West Centretown in Ottawa, and is bounded by Highway 417 to the south, Rochester Street on the east, Gladstone Avenue on the north, and Preston Street on the west.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

300 Rochester Street has design value as a representative example of a Modernist school. The building embodies Modernist architectural philosophy and demonstrates it stylistically in its use of concrete, glass, and its repetitive and rectilinear forms. As a Modernist school, it represents an ambitious and complete departure from traditional school architecture, both in form and materiality. The building, spanning a city block, features three pavilions atop a shared podium. The classroom and library pavilions demonstrate elements of the International Style, including an emphasis on clean lines and vertical elements. The classroom pavilion features floor-to-ceiling rectangular windows supported by columns. The auditorium pavilion incorporates a large blank façade, reflecting the Modernist philosophy of functional design.

Constructed in 1966 as a purpose-built commerce high school, 300 Rochester Street has historical and associative value because it has direct associations with the evolution of the school system in Ontario following the Second World War. The post-war period marked an era of prosperity and population growth in Ontario, with educational policy and funding directed towards building commerce high schools to prepare the growing workforce.

The property also has associative value for its direct association with urban renewal in Ottawa. The development of 300 Rochester Street was the anchor project to the Preston Street Renewal Plan, which was among the most significant and costly urban renewal projects in the city. Post-war urban renewal was a trend across North America to redevelop areas that were seen as blighted. Today, the negative impacts of urban renewal are seen to include social displacement and the loss of historic neighbourhood fabric.

300 Rochester Street has the potential to yield information that contributes to an understanding of Ottawa's Italian community, the community of West Centretown, and Ottawa's newcomer community. The expropriations and construction of 300 Rochester Street resulted in the permanent displacement of members of Ottawa's Italian community and other West Centretown residents. The displacements mark an

important, albeit negative, event in the communities' histories. Since 1990, the property has been the Adult High School, which has strong connections with Ottawa's newcomer community as newcomers have long made up the majority of the student body.

300 Rochester Street has historical value because it demonstrates the work of Sidney Lithwick, a prolific twentieth century architect who lived and worked in Ottawa. Lithwick's firm was responsible for many secondary schools and several high-profile institutional projects in the mid-twentieth century, including the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario.

300 Rochester Street has contextual value as a landmark due to its prominent location near major transportation corridors, and due to the high visibility of the distinct Modernist architectural features of the classroom and auditorium pavilions.

Description of Heritage Attributes

Unified Campus

Key exterior attributes that contribute to the cultural heritage value of 300 Rochester Street as a representative example of a Modernist school campus, with elements of the International Style, include:

- The overall cohesion of the building as a campus, spanning a city block, and featuring three pavilions that are visible atop a shared podium. The pavilions include the library to the southwest, the auditorium to the southeast, and the classroom pavilion to the north.
- The school building base which responds to the topography of the property, standing at two-storeys along the west elevation, one storey along the north elevation, and at grade at the east elevation
- The strong visual relationship between the three pavilions, connected by a rooftop plaza with walkways and sunken courtyards
- The repetitive, rectilinear forms and symmetry displayed throughout the building with minimal decoration
- Clear expression of the structural system expressed in the engaged pillars and deep overhangs
- Materiality of precast concrete and steel with a muted colour palette of white, black, brown, and blue.

Classroom Pavilion (Pavilion A)

- Rectilinear plan with flat roof

- Consistency of rhythm and sense of verticality on all facades created by:
 - Sculptural concrete engaged pillars that extend from above the roofline to grade
 - Regularly spaced, vertical bands of windows with spandrel panels
 - Colonnade and walkway created by the extension of the concrete pillars from roof to grade
 - Glazed ground floor on the north, south and east elevations
- Grey slate tile and brown enameled pressed steel accents
- Central entrance on the east façade facing Rochester Street

Library Pavilion (Pavilion B)

- Rectilinear plan and flat roof
- Consistent rhythm across all facades created by vertically oriented second storey window openings framed by concrete fins
- Brown ceramic tile mosaic above the entrance doors on the east and west facades

Auditorium Pavilion (Pavilion C)

- Massing composed of a variety of rectilinear forms with a butterfly roofline and clerestorey windows
- Large blank south, east and west façades composed of precast concrete panels
- North façade featuring upper storey cantilevered over the glazed main entrance creating a sense of weight and shelter
- Metal brise soleil on east and west sides of the second storey volume
- Grey slate tile accents
- Interior of the auditorium, including the volume, ceiling, cantilevered balcony, mosaic, and decorative brickwork.

The surface parking area, fields, and any additions or outbuildings are not heritage attributes of this property and are excluded from this designation.

With the exception of the interior heritage attributes identified for the Auditorium Pavilion (Pavilion C), there are no other interior heritage attributes.