

HERITAGE SURVEY AND EVALUATION FORM

Building Name and Address: York Street Public School, 310 York Street

Construction Date: 1921-22

Original Owner: Ottawa Public School Board



Source: © 2022 Google

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE/ INTEREST

	Yes	No
Design Value	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Historical Value	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contextual Value	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A property may be designated under Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* if it meets one or more of the above criteria. Ontario Regulation 09/06

Design or Physical Value

Architecture

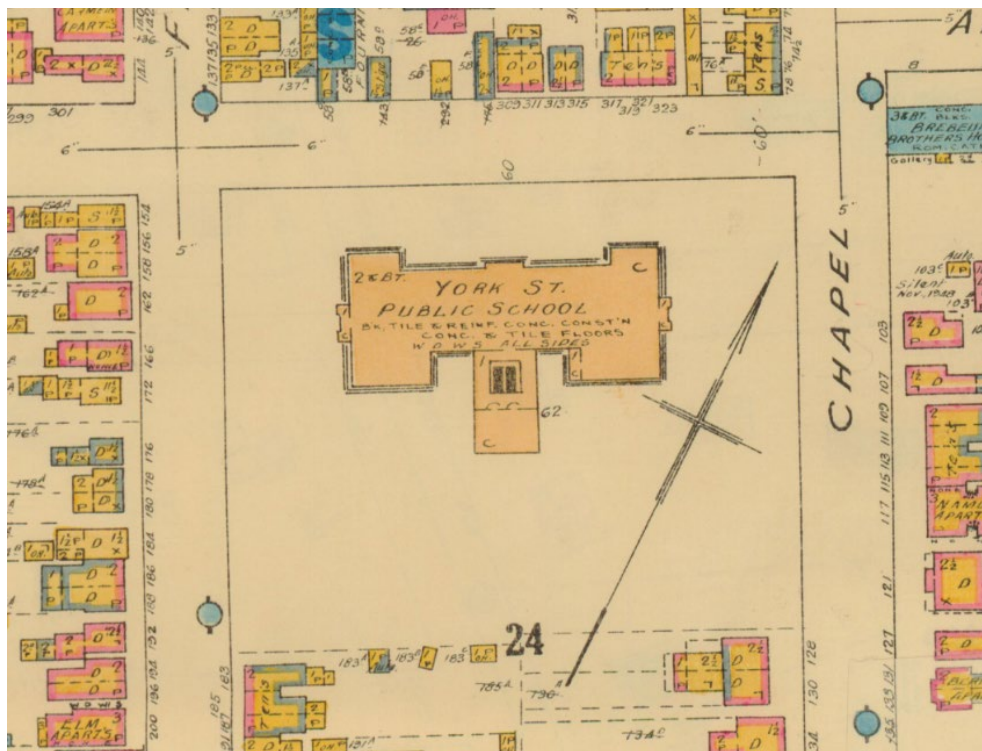
Is the property a rare, unique, representative, or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method? YES NO

York Street Public School is a representative example of the Collegiate Gothic style, a sub-style of the Gothic Revival movement popular throughout North America from the late 19th to mid 20th century (Ricketts et al, 2004). Collegiate Gothic architecture primarily involved the adaptation of the Gothic and Gothic Revival architectural vocabulary to large scale buildings and was particularly pervasive in secondary and post-secondary educational architecture. Collegiate Gothic architecture is broadly characterized by its use of long and low symmetrical building masses, crenellated towers and parapets, gothic fenestration and monochromatic cladding. The school opened in September 1922 and replaced four smaller schools in the area - Robinson Primary, George Street, Rideau Street and Bolton Street schools.



Source: York Street Public School, Ottawa, Ont, built in 1921-22, Library and Archives Canada / PA-043603.

The E-shaped, two-storey building is clad in brown brick highlighted with stone details throughout each facade. The rectangular central mass sits on a raised basement with projecting wings at the east and west end and two wings, including a gymnasium, projecting from the rear. The fenestration pattern is consistent throughout, generally featuring rectangular windows with stone sills arranged in groups of two or three. A parapet punctuated with stone detailing sits atop the second storey and stone stringcourses above the basement and below the parapet wrap the building. A single brick and stone chimney located at the centre of building, offset to the rear.



1948 Fire Insurance Plans depicting school at corners of Friel, York, and Chapel Streets, prior to construction of Beausoleil Drive (Underwriter's Survey Bureau, 1948)

The school's main entrance, centrally located on the north façade, is characterized by a frontispiece featuring a recessed stone entrance with a pointed archway, hood mould and rectangular columns. The spandrels of the archway and portions of the frieze are decorated and an engraved entablature bearing the school's name sits above the archway. The motif on the frieze continues on the sides of the frontispiece. Above the entablature are three central windows with stone surrounds, topped with a hoodmold decorated with four flowers. A date stone

engraved with “1921” is set within the brown brick above the windows. The rectangular columns are topped with a stone cap and feature lancet louvre windows and decoration in the stone. A stone pediment is centred between the columns on top of the parapet.

The school originally featured separate entrances for boys on the west facade and girls on the east façade, a feature commemorated by the engraved “boys” and “girls” signs above each respective entrance. The entrances on each façade are centred within a stone frontispiece with an arch and hood mould. The spandrel and frieze feature stone quatrefoil details



Central front entrance. Source: City of Ottawa Archives, 1991

The projecting wings on the north are simple in character, featuring tall windows in sets of two at the basement level, square columns with simple stone caps, a pair of central, vertical stone bands between the parapet and stringcourses, decorative brick banding with stone tile on the corners, and the continuation of the parapet with stone detailing complimenting that of the central entrance. The projecting wings on the south façade are similar in character, both feature simple decoration like the north wings, with vertical stone bands, capped columns, and the continuation of the parapet. Two bay windows are centred on the south façade of

the easterly wing, decorated with stone quoins, surrounds and a hoodmold. Attached is an entrance vestibule with a stone arch doorway, stone stringcourse, and flat roof. The adjacent south wing features three vertical bands with two narrow rectangular windows at the centre of the central band, along with three smaller windows at basement level. The central gymnasium wing is one and one half storeys in height and features arched window bays topped with a stone arch. Each bay has three long windows with a stone sill.



Wings

Top: Wing on north façade, Bottom left: Wing on south façade closer to boys entrance,
Bottom right: Wing on south façade closer to girls entrance

Source: © 2022 Google

Windows on the north, east and west façades are long with brick lintels and stone sills, in sets of three on first and second storeys, and in sets of two on the raised basement. The size of the windows in the raised basement differ with the windows on the projecting end bays bigger in length compared to the windows on the rectangular core on the north, east and west façades.

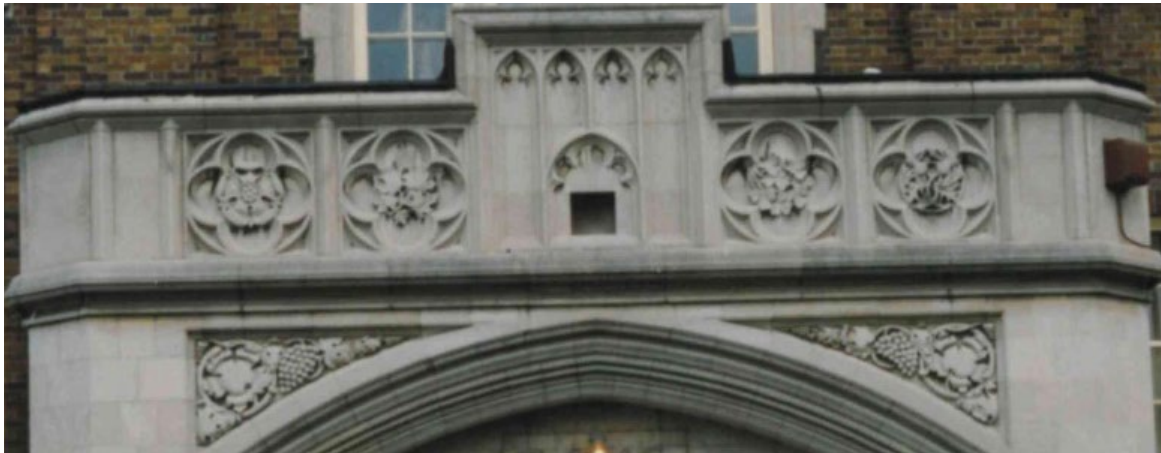
Craftsmanship/Artistic Merit

Does the property display a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit?

YES

NO

York Street Public School displays a high degree of artistic merit. Notable features include the stone detailing adorning the side entrances, particularly the carved, quatrefoil panels including the motifs of rose, thistle, shamrock, and maple leaves on the frieze. The symbols likely refer to England (rose), Scotland (thistle), Ireland (shamrock) and Canada (maple leaf).



Detailing on the Girls entrance (Google, 2022)

Technical/Scientific Merit

Does the property demonstrate a high degree of technical or scientific achievement?

YES

NO

York Street Public School demonstrates a degree of technical achievement typical for new, purpose built schools of the same era. Walter Hamilton, Chairman of the Ottawa Board of Education, visited fifteen American and Canadian cities to study contemporary developments in school design (York School Dates Back To Bytown Days). Architect W. C. Beattie, Superintendent of Buildings for the Ottawa Board of Education, designed the school based on these observations. The school was designed to be fireproof, have a modern steam heating system, and provide ample lighting and ventilation. It provided a full range of facilities in its design, including 17 regular classrooms with ventilated lockers in each room, showers, a full scale gymnasium, a health room, and teachers' room. The design also included rooms for cooking, woodworking, art, pottery, and a kindergarten (York School Dates Back To Bytown Days).

Historical and Associative Value

Historical Associations

Does the property have direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community?

YES NO

York Street Public School is associated with the delivery of English-language education in the Lowertown neighbourhood since 1922, serving an increasingly diverse Lowertown population. Construction of the school may have coincided with the growth of Lowertown's Jewish population in the early 20th century (Aqrabawi).

The school is associated with several notable alumni, including 26th Governor General Adrienne Clarkson, who attended York Street Public School after arriving in Canada as a refugee from Hong Kong (Biography: THE RT. HON. ADRIENNE CLARKSON, PC, CC, CMM, COM, CD).

Community History

Does the property yield, or have the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture? YES NO

York Street Public School contributes to an understanding of the growth and development of Ottawa since the early 20th century and the history of public education throughout Ottawa and specifically in Lowertown. Existing as a functioning public school since its opening in 1922, York Street Public School has served generations of children from Lowertown East and other surrounding areas, reflecting the societal changes and successive demographic shifts since the early 20th century including periods pre-war immigration, the great depression, the Second World War, and post-war urban renewal in Lowertown. Further analysis of York Street Public School, such as specific research into its students, their families, and its administration, may contribute to a greater understanding of Lowertown East and the specific communities who have lived in the neighbourhood.

Representative Work

Does the property demonstrate or reflect the work or ideas of an architect, artist, building, designer or theorist who is significant to a community? YES NO

York Street Public School is a representative work of Ottawa architect, William Caven Beattie, who served as the Superintendent of Buildings for the Ottawa Public School Board from 1919 to 1924. His best-known work is St. Patrick's College, now Immaculata High School. Other notable works include Hydro-Electric substation No. 4 at 351 King Edward Avenue (1931), the Ottawa Hydro Electric Commission Office Building at Bank and Albert Street (1934) and the Lord Elgin Hotel (1940-41) in collaboration with Montreal architectural firm Ross and Macdonald.

Contextual Value

Community Character

Is the property important in defining, maintaining, or supporting the character of the area? YES NO

Lowertown East is a community of mixed character, given the area's multiple eras of development and redevelopment. York Street Public School contributes to, maintains and supports this mixed character, being the sole example of Collegiate Gothic Architecture in the immediate neighbourhood and being located between clusters of pre-war and post-war housing.

Context

Is the property physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings? YES NO

York Street Public School is functionally, and historically linked to its surroundings through its continuing role as an educational institution in Lowertown East. The school is functionally linked to its surroundings because it is a public school attended by residents of the immediate neighbourhood. The school is historically linked to its surroundings because it represents an intervening era in the development of Lowertown, constructed following the first world war and prior to the urban renewal related development which later characterized the community. Generations of Lowertown residents have attended this school which has remained a physical and institutional constant in the community.

Landmark

Is the property a landmark? YES NO

York Street Public School is a landmark in Lowertown East because of its distinct Collegiate Gothic architectural style, its corner location at Beausoleil Drive and York Street including significant setbacks on all frontages, and its longstanding use as an elementary school for residents of the immediate neighbourhood.

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