

St. Joseph Court Apartments

Description

The property at 16 St. Joseph Street is worthy of inclusion on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties for its cultural heritage value or interest. The site is located on the north side of St. Joseph Street, and extends north to Irwin Street along the west side of St. Nicholas Street. Constructed according to plans dated October 1926, the 3½-storey apartment building was completed by September 1927 when it was first recorded in the tax assessment rolls.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The St. Joseph Court Apartments have physical or design value as a representative example of an apartment building displaying elements of Edwardian Classicism. The style was popularized in the early 20th century and identified by its symmetry and application of Classical details. The apartment complex is a visible feature on St. Joseph Street with its scale and decorative detailing.

The property is historically associated with the practice of the Toronto architectural firm of Catto and Catto. The St. Joseph Court Apartments complex was one of the pair's first commissions after forming a partnership in 1925. Donald E. Catto and Ronald W. Catto designed a range of residential, commercial, industrial and institutional buildings, many of which were featured in the architectural periodicals of the pre-World War II era. Donald E. Catto served as the president of the Ontario Association of Architects in 1961.

Contextually, the St. Joseph Court Apartments contributes to the character of St. Joseph Street, which winds between Yonge Street (east) and Bay Street (west) and contains a mixture of residential and commercial buildings. The neighbouring Cloverhill Apartments (1940) at #26 St. Joseph are included on the City's heritage inventory, while the adjoining row housing (1879) at #6-14 St. Joseph, the semi-detached houses (1892) at #18 and 20 St. Joseph Street, and the Rawlinson Cartage complex (dating to 1895 and afterward) at #5 and 11 St. Joseph and #9 and 15 St. Nicholas Street are designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the St. Joseph Court Apartments related to the building's cultural heritage value as a representative example of an early 20th apartment complex with features of Edwardian Classicism are found at the north and south ends of the I-shaped plan. The structure is organized with two wings facing St. Joseph Street and Irwin Street, respectively, which are linked by a long and narrow connecting body. The heritage attributes are concentrated on the principal (south) façade of the south wing, the north elevation of the north wing, the adjoining east and west elevations of the south and

north wings, and the rooflines with decorative detailing above the latter walls. Rising three stories above a raised base with window openings, the structure is clad with red brick and trimmed with stone. Cornices surmount the brick parapets with stone string courses and geometrical detailing that extend along the rooflines of the south and north facades and the adjacent side (east and west) elevations.

On the south wing, the south façade is organized into five bays with a central three-bay frontispiece. Centered in the first floor, the main entrance is surmounted by a large stairhall opening with a stone surround (the current vestibule protecting the entry is an addition that is not included as a heritage attribute). On either side of the entrance and in the upper stories, flat-headed window openings display stone lintels and sills. String courses create horizontal divisions that link the first-floor window heads and extend above the third storey to highlight the stairhall window. The decorative detailing and the symmetrical organization of the flat-headed fenestration are repeated on the first three bays of the east and west elevations adjoining the south façade.

The north elevation of the north wing presents a three-part stepped wall, which is truncated at the northeast corner where Irwin Street meets St. Nicholas Street. The central raised entry (the doors are not original and are not identified as heritage attributes) is surmounted and flanked by flat-headed window openings with stone lintels and sills. These features, and the string courses that extend above the first and third stories, are repeated on the adjacent three bays of the east and west walls.

The remaining walls of the north and south wings and the connecting body are not included in the Reasons for Listing.