

401 Richmond Street West: Macdonald Manufacturing Company BuildingsDescription

The property at 401 Richmond Street West is recommended for inclusion on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties for its cultural heritage value or interest. The complex of former manufacturing buildings is situated on the south side of Richmond Street West in the first block east of Spadina Avenue. Constructed in five stages between 1899 and 1923, the buildings were commissioned by the Macdonald Manufacturing Company, tinware lithographers. In 1994, the complex was converted to a cultural centre for artists that has received awards for the adaptive reuse of historical buildings.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The Macdonald Manufacturing Company Buildings have physical or design value as representative examples of an industrial complex from the turn of the 20th century. The site contains a series of interconnected buildings and structures that have been embellished with decorative brick and stone, and highlighted by the treatment of the main (west) entrance and the presence of a tower and smokestack.

Contextually, the Macdonald Manufacturing Company Buildings assist in maintaining, defining and supporting the historical character of the King-Spadina neighbourhood as it continues to evolve with the conversion of former industrial buildings for new uses. To date, over 100 properties representing the historical development of the area since the mid 19th century have been included on the City's heritage inventory.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the Macdonald Manufacturing Company Buildings are found on the exterior walls, flat roofs, and interiors described below. The complex is divided into a series of attached buildings which form a U-shape with an interior courtyard. The buildings are clad with red brick, apart from brown brick cladding on the rear (south) walls of some of the buildings fronting on Richmond Street.

Along Richmond Street, three adjoining buildings rise four stories above a raised base with window openings. The flat roofs are embellished with corbelled brickwork and dentils on the west and centre buildings and stone coping on the east building. The principal (north) facades of the three buildings extend a total of 39 bays. Large segmental-arched window openings (one opening on the west façade has been altered) with stone sills, triple brick flat arches and, in most cases, 12-over-12 sash windows are found in the first floor and reduced in height in the upper three stories. Four entrances containing cargo doors are placed intermittently along the north facades. The main entrance to the complex is located on the west wall of the west building in a monumental

arched surround (the doors have been replaced). A continuous stone band with corbelled brickwork above links the window openings flanking the entry.

The symmetrical placement of the fenestration continues on the remaining elevations of the buildings that make up the Macdonald Manufacturing Company complex. Important individual features are the multi-sided tower (found on the south wall and overlooking the interior courtyard), the open courtyard between the buildings, the rooftop garden (which has been added since the complex was converted to an artists' centre), and the brick smokestack at the south end of the complex. On the interior, the west lobby (inside the main entrance) with the floors, columns, ceiling and doors is included in the Reasons for Listing.