

Royal Ontario Museum
100 Queen's Park

The property at 100 Queen's Park is identified for its cultural resource value or interest. Located in landscaped open space on the southwest corner of Queen's Park and Bloor Street West, the Royal Ontario Museum was founded in 1912 and evolved from a facility specializing in natural history and human civilization to the largest museum in the British Commonwealth outside of London, England. The notable architectural firm of Darling and Pearson designed the original building (West Wing, 1914), with architects Chapman and Oxley designing the Centre Block and East Wing (1933) and the Office Building (1933 and 1937). The Royal Ontario Museum is architecturally and historically significant as a cultural institution of international renown that is a landmark in the City of Toronto.

The Royal Ontario Museum complex displays elements derived from historical architecture, including the Romanesque Revival. The Reasons for Identification consist of the H-shaped complex where the Centre Block links the East Wing (along Queen's Park) and the West Wing (facing Philosopher's Walk), with the Office Building at the south end of the latter wing. The West Wing features a three-storey rectangular plan above a stone base, brick cladding with brick, stone and terra cotta trim, a flat roof with a parapet, round-arched door and window openings, Roman stone balconies, and three-storey bay windows. The East Wing has a three-storey rectangular plan with a centre block, wings and end pavilions beneath a copper-clad pitched roof with parapets and, above the centre block, a hexagonal skylight. With brick cladding on the west wall and Queenston limestone cladding with Credit Valley limestone trim on the other elevations, the East Wing incorporates trios of flat-headed and round-arched window openings with decorated spandrels, mullions and stonework. The east frontispiece contains the principal entrance and an elaborate sculptural program, where pylons and altar blocks flank three sets of doors with carved piers, a nameplate and pictorial panels. Above this entry, a monumental round arch has mouldings, stained and leaded glass panels, and sculpted detailing with a pictorial frieze and a tympanum incorporating a seated figure, crests and other imagery. A monumental round arch and sculpted detailing are found on the north and south elevations of the East Wing. The three-storey Centre Block has brick cladding and regularly placed window openings. Beneath a flat roof with a parapet, the Office Building rises four stories above a raised stone base and displays brick facing and round-arched fenestration.

On the interior of the East Wing, the octagonal-shaped Rotunda (lobby) and the main staircase are significant heritage attributes that are included in the Reasons for Identification. The coloured marble floor, mosaic ceiling and balconies at the mezzanine level incorporate geometric patterns and other imagery. Adjacent to the Rotunda, the staircase with marble detailing rises the full height of the building under the skylight.

Heritage Preservation Services
October 2003: KA