

1117 Queen Street West - Notice of Intention to Designate a Property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act

Date: August 3, 2022

To: City Council

From: Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

Wards: Ward 9 - Davenport

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council state its intention to designate the property at 1117 Queen Street West under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

The property is located on the south side of Queen Street West between Lisgar Street and Abell Street in the West Queen West neighbourhood, and contains Postal Station 'C', a two-storey building completed in 1903. The Beaux-Arts building was designed by the architecture branch of the federal Department of Public Works, with S.G. Curry acting as the local associate architect.

The property was listed on the City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties (now the Heritage Register) on June 20, 1973, and is a landmark property within the proposed West Queen West Heritage Conservation District.

The property functioned as a post office for more than a century until Canada Post ceased operations at the site in 2020. The property was listed for sale on the private market and sold in late 2021.

The sale of the federally-owned building prompted many local community members to voice their concern for its survival. In July 2021, City Council adopted a member motion to request a halt to the proposed sale, and directed the City Manager to request that Canada Post work with the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, the Director and Chief Executive Officer, Toronto Arts Council, and members of the local community to examine and take measures to retain the building in public ownership for the purpose of establishing a cultural and arts hub for the neighbouring community and the City at large.

Staff have completed the Research and Evaluation Report for the property at 1117 Queen Street West and determined that the property meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario

Heritage Act under design and physical, historical and associative, and contextual values. As such, the property is a significant built heritage resource.

In June 2019, the More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019 (Bill 108) received Royal Assent. Schedule 11 of this Act included amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act. The Bill 108 Amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act came into force on July 1, 2021, which included a shift in Part IV designations related to certain Planning Act applications. Section 29(1.2) of the Ontario Heritage Act now restricts City Council's ability to give notice of its intention to designate a property under the Act to within 90 days after the City Clerk gives notice of a complete application.

The designation of this property is not subject to Section 29(1.2), as there are no open planning applications for the site.

A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is required for all development applications that affect listed and designated properties and will be considered when determining how a heritage property is to be conserved. Designation also enables City Council to review proposed alterations or demolitions to the property and enforce heritage property standards and maintenance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning recommends that:

1. City Council state its intention to designate the property at 1117 Queen Street West under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act in accordance with the Statement of Significance; 1117 Queen Street West (Reasons for Designation) attached as Attachment 3, to the report, August 3, 2022, from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning:
2. If there are no objections to the designation, City Council authorize the City Solicitor to introduce the Bill in Council designating the property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

The property was listed on the City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties (now the Heritage Register) on June 20, 1973.

On June 22, 2017, the Toronto Preservation Board recommended proceeding from Study to Plan phase for the proposed West Queen West Heritage Conservation District. The boundaries of the proposed HCD include the subject property.
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.PB24.2>

On December 16, 2020, City Council approved the listing of 250 properties within the West Queen West Area on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register.
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.TE21.18>

On July 14, 2021, City Council adopted a member motion to request a halt to the proposed sale of the publicly-owned Canada Post site and directed the City Manager to request that Canada Post work with the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, the Director and Chief Executive Officer, Toronto Arts Council, and members of the local community to examine and take measures to retain the building in public ownership for the purpose of establishing a cultural and arts hub for the neighbouring community and the City at large. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.MM35.1>

BACKGROUND

Heritage Planning Framework

The conservation of cultural heritage resources is an integral component of good planning, contributing to a sense of place, economic prosperity, and healthy and equitable communities. Heritage conservation in Ontario is identified as a provincial interest under the Planning Act. Cultural heritage resources are considered irreplaceable and valuable assets that must be wisely protected and managed as part of planning for future growth under the Provincial Policy Statement (2020) and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020). Heritage Conservation is enabled through the Ontario Heritage Act. The City of Toronto's Official Plan implements the provincial policy regime, the Planning Act, the Ontario Heritage Act and provides policies to guide decision making within the city.

Good planning within the provincial and municipal policy framework has at its foundation an understanding and appreciation for places of historic significance, and ensures the conservation of these resources are to be balanced with other provincial interests. Heritage resources may include buildings, structures, monuments, and geographic areas that have cultural heritage value or interest to a community, including an Indigenous community.

The Ontario Heritage Act is the key provincial legislation for the conservation of cultural heritage resources in Ontario. It regulates, among other things, how municipal councils can identify and protect heritage resources, including archaeology, within municipal boundaries. This is largely achieved through listing on the City's Heritage Register, designation of individual properties under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, or designation of districts under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Section 27 of the Ontario Heritage Act gives municipalities the authority to maintain and add to a publicly accessible heritage register. The City of Toronto's Heritage Register includes individual heritage properties that have been designated under Part IV, Section 29, properties in a heritage conservation district designated under Part V, Section 41 of the Act as well as properties that have not been designated but City Council believes to be of "cultural heritage value or interest."

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90o18>

Ontario Regulation 9/06 sets out the criteria for evaluating properties to be designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. The criteria are based on an evaluation of design/physical value, historical and associative value and contextual value. A property may be designated under section 29 of the Act if it meets one or more of the provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest.

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/060009>

The Ontario Heritage Toolkit provides guidance on designating properties of municipal significance, including direction on the purpose of designating heritage properties and information about how the Provincial Policy Statement and the Ontario Heritage Act provide a framework for the conservation of heritage properties within the land use planning system. In June 2019, the More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019 (Bill 108) received Royal Assent. Schedule 11 of this Act included amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA). The Bill 108 Amendments to the OHA came into force on July 1, 2021, which included, amongst other matters, amendments to the listing and designation processes. Guidance from the Province related to the implementation of Bill 108 Amendments is forthcoming.

[Ontario Heritage Tool Kit \(gov.on.ca\)](https://www.ontario.ca/gov/ontario-heritage-toolkit)

The City of Toronto's Official Plan contains a number of policies related to properties on the City's Heritage Register and properties adjacent to them, as well as the protection of areas of archaeological potential. Indicating the integral role that heritage conservation plays in successful city-building, Section 3.1.5 of the Official Plan states that, "Cultural heritage is an important component of sustainable development and place making. The preservation of our cultural heritage is essential to the character of this urban and liveable City that can contribute to other social, cultural, economic and environmental goals of the City."

Policy 3.1.5.4 states that heritage resources on the City's Heritage Register "will be conserved and maintained consistent with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, as revised from time to time and adopted by Council."

Policy 3.1.5.6 encourages the adaptive re-use of heritage properties while Policy 3.1.5.26 states that, when new construction on, or adjacent to, a property on the Heritage Register does occur, it will be designed to conserve the cultural heritage values, attributes and character of that property and will mitigate visual and physical impacts on it.

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/official-plan/>

COMMENTS

Located on the south side of Queen Street West between Abell and Lisgar streets, the two-storey brick building was constructed as a post office in 1903 in a stripped Beaux-Arts style. The property functioned as a post office for more than a century with minimal alterations until Canada Post ceased operations at the site in 2020.

Community members quickly recognized the opportunity to adaptively reuse the sheltered area of the loading dock, effectively extending the adjacent public space of Lisgar Park. The raised platform and overhead canopy facilitated outdoor public gatherings during the initial lockdown period of the Covid-19 pandemic, allowing the community to come together safely outdoors. Affectionately called 'the back porch' by local community members, the loading dock was given new purpose as the location of a multitude of creative uses, such as community movie nights.

Due to growing budget deficits, the Crown Corporation announced their intention to divest the property. Efforts by local community members, including a petition that garnered well over two thousand signatures, were unsuccessful at halting the sale of the property in order to allow time for public consultation and to determine the feasibility of retaining public ownership. The deadline to submit a bid for the property closed in July 2021 and the sale of the property was finalized in December 2021. The designation of the site as an individual property under Part IV of the Act would enable the City to identify and conserve the heritage values and attributes of the property.

The Property has been listed on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register since 1973. Because the federal government is not subject to the Ontario Heritage Act, the subject property was not eligible for municipal designation until recently. Heritage Planning generally conducts research and evaluation of a property in anticipation of transfer out of federal or provincial ownership (e.g. Dominion Public Building at 1 Front Street West and the Hearn Generating Station) but, in this case, the completed sale of the property necessitates staff evaluation at this time.

In preparing this report, City staff contacted the Federal Heritage Building Review Office (FHBRO) to seek research on the property. City staff were advised that the obligation for a federally-owned building to be evaluated for its heritage value is specified in the Treasury Board Directive on the Management of Real Property (this Directive came into effect in May 2021; formerly, it was the Policy on Management of Real Property that contained this requirement). However, the government bodies that fall under this Directive, and previously the Policy, are only those that meet the definition of "department" under the Financial Administration Act (s.2). Crown corporations, such as Canada Post, do not meet that definition and therefore are not subject to the Directive. Consequently, Canada Post is not obliged to submit their buildings for heritage evaluation by FHBRO. The federal government did not evaluate the property for cultural heritage value prior the sale of the property into private ownership.

It should be noted that City staff were not granted access to the interior of the building during the research and evaluation of the property in order to determine if any interior features merit inclusion as heritage attributes.

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Research and Evaluation according to Ontario Regulation 9/06

While the research and evaluation of the property referenced above is, in staff's determination, sufficient to support the designation of the property at 1117 Queen Street West, it should be noted that public access to the City of Toronto Archives remained limited during the preparation of this report due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Research Hall is open on an appointment basis only, at a limited capacity, and new and additional relevant information on the subject property further expanding on its heritage value may be forthcoming following increased access to these archival records and may provide further information to be incorporated in the final version of a Part IV designation by-law.



View of the property at 1117 Queen Street West looking southwest (Heritage Planning, 2022)

1. DESCRIPTION

1117 Queen Street West, Postal Station 'C'	
ADDRESS	1117 Queen Street West
WARD	Davenport - 9
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	PLAN 878 LOT D
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	Little Portugal (West Queen West)
HISTORICAL NAME	Postal Station 'C'
CONSTRUCTION DATE	1903
ORIGINAL OWNER	The Crown
ORIGINAL USE	Institutional (Post Office)
CURRENT USE*	Vacant
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER	Department of Public Works of Canada under Chief Architect David Ewart, with S.G. Curry (as local associate architect); F.D. Brown and George Love (construction), Harrison & Robertson (hot water heating system).
DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION/MATERIALS	Brick and Stone
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	Beaux-Arts
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS	- Loading Dock alterations: 1949, 1960, 2012 - Fire stairs added to east façade: 1960
CRITERIA	Design/Physical, Historical/Associative, Contextual
HERITAGE STATUS	Listed
RECORDER	Heritage Planning; Megan Albinger
REPORT DATE	July 14, 2022

2. BACKGROUND

This research and evaluation section of the report describes the history, architecture and context of the property at 1117 Queen Street West, and applies evaluation criteria as set out in Ontario Regulation 9/06, under the headings of historical/associative, design/physical and contextual value to determine whether they merit designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. A property may be designated under Section 29 of the Act if it meets one or more of the provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest. The application of the criteria is found in Section 3 (Evaluation Checklist). The conclusions of the research and evaluation are found in the Conclusion of the report. Maps and Photographs are located in Attachment 1. The archival and contemporary sources for the research are found in Attachment 2. The Statements of Significance are contained in Attachment 3.

i. HISTORICAL TIMELINE

Key Date	Historical Event
	The area now known as the City of Toronto is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit (1805), and the Williams Treaties (1923) signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.
1793	The Town of York is established and surveyed. Lands to the west of the town and south of the First Concession Line are set aside for a Military Reserve.
1845	A 50-acre property on Queen Street West within the Military Reserve is set aside for the Provincial Lunatic Asylum; the institution opens to patients in 1850.
1889	The east and west portions of the asylum grounds are subdivided under Plan 878 and sold. Block D is purchased from The Crown by The Land Security Company on February 11, 1889.
April 18, 1902	The Crown repurchases Block D for \$6,000. Calls for tender for the construction of a building for Postal Station 'C' are immediately published in The Globe and the Toronto Daily Star.
May 21, 1902	The contract for the construction of Postal Station 'C' at 1117 Queen Street West is signed.
June 22, 1903	Postal Station 'C' opens for business.
1973	The property is listed on the City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties (now the Heritage Register).
2012	After previously being modified in 1949 and 1960, the rear loading dock area is altered to its extant condition.
2020	Canada Post ceases operations at 1117 Queen Street West.
2021	1117 Queen Street West is listed for sale by Canada Post. The sale to a private entity is finalized on December 15, 2021.

ii. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The following section outlines the history and facts related to the properties which are the basis for determining 'Historical and Associative Value' according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

West Queen West Neighbourhood

The history of Queen Street West (originally known as Lot Street) dates back to the founding of the Town of York and the initial survey of the land in 1793. The land on the north side of Queen Street between the Humber River on the west and the Don River on the east was divided into a series of 100-acre Park Lots, which were granted to military officers and other government supporters. South of Queen Street, much of the land was held as part of the Military Reserve (also called the Garrison Reserve or Garrison Common). This was an open area of defensible ground surrounding Fort York,

protecting the town of York to the east. In 1834 when the City of Toronto was incorporated, the western boundary of the Military Reserve was marked at what is now Dufferin Street, the western City limits. As both the population and Town of York expanded, some of the Reserve land was sold for private development. However, several lots in what is now the West Queen West neighbourhood were held for future institutional uses that would serve the growing population of the City.

The earliest of these government institutions to be built was the Provincial Lunatic Asylum, the first section of which was completed in 1850, on the south side of Queen Street West at the axis of what is today's Ossington Avenue. Other developments on the former Military Reserve included the Crystal Palace (1858) on the Agricultural Show Grounds, and the Central Prison (1873) as well as the Mercer Reformatory for Women (1880) (Figure 3).

The 1850s also saw the arrival of the railway to the area, which had a large impact on development. Up to this point, the Military Reserve lands were largely undeveloped, but after a significant portion of the remaining land was used for railway infrastructure, many industrial establishments began operating in the area attracted by the proximity to new transportation opportunities. Notably, the John Abell Company of Woodbridge (manufacturers of steam-powered agricultural equipment) occupied a key site in the triangle created by the intersection of the tracks with Queen Street West, opposite today's Beaconsfield Avenue, to the immediate west of the Provincial Lunatic Asylum lands (Figure 4). In 1885, the Parkdale Station was built adjacent to the tracks to serve the Town of Parkdale, which began to grow rapidly after its initial incorporation as a village in 1878. A few years later in 1889, Parkdale was annexed by the City of Toronto, expanding services and streetcar lines westward. Also in 1889, the Gladstone Hotel was constructed on the north side of Queen Street West across from Parkdale Station to serve both the local community and the travellers brought by the railway (Figure 6).

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At the time of Confederation in 1867, the Federal government inherited a limited number of post offices from the provinces.¹ In order to establish a national postal network, a considerable effort to construct more facilities was required, and steady progress was made over the next three decades. However, one of the postal system's most significant periods of development occurred during the tenure of William Mulock, who was appointed to the role of Postmaster-General by the newly-elected Liberal administration in 1896. Prior to his retirement in 1905, Mulock oversaw many reforms to the postal system primarily through the introduction of new business practices and postage rates. The success of his restructuring plans depended on an increased number of postal stations and facilities to support a more efficient service, so property acquisition was also a focus during this period.

Meanwhile, officials were reconsidering the amount of land required for the Provincial Lunatic Asylum and its programs. On December 21, 1888, the Crown filed Plan of

¹ Archibald, p.4.

Subdivision 878, dividing the western portion of the asylum grounds (Figure 5).² The square land parcel of Block D was created in the northwest corner of these lands by the extension of Lisgar Street south of Queen Street West. Block D was initially granted to the Land Security Company in 1889, later to be repurchased by the Crown in April of 1902 for the purpose of establishing a new Postal Station in Toronto's west end. The proximity to the railway and the lot's isolation from other buildings offering protection from potential fires made the location attractive from an operations perspective.

Designs for the new building were prepared by the Department of Public Works of Canada. The contract for the construction of Postal Station 'C' was entered into on May 21, 1902, with the contractors F.D. Brown and George Love leading the construction of the building, and the contractors Harrison & Robertson leading the provision of the hot water heating system.³ Samuel George Curry was appointed to the role of local associate architect. Thirteen months later, Postal Station 'C' opened on June 22, 1903 (Figures 7-9).⁴

Postal Station 'C' became an important public asset to local residents and the businesses that were served by having post boxes at the building. By 1918, Postal Station 'C' served a large geographical area, from Bathurst Street west to the Humber River (including the Swansea District) between Queen Street and Bloor Street.⁵ The Station also remained open through multiple postal strikes during the early half of the 20th century, providing a critical service during a time when means of communication were limited. During the peak Christmas holiday period, the basement was used to provide additional capacity to handle the overwhelming volume of letters and parcels being routed through the Station.⁶

In more recent years, the post office has been utilized by the large and diverse arts and culture community that grew out of the former industrial buildings in the West Queen West area. Local businesses and non-profit organizations had post boxes at Postal Station 'C', and the location was known for handling requests for odd-shaped parcels as a result.⁷ Following the closure of the post office in 2020 and the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, local community members quickly transformed the sheltered space of the rear loading dock into an extension of the adjacent Lisgar Park. In many ways, the utilitarian nature of the canopy and raised platform formed a backdrop for the community-initiated adaptive reuse of the structure, facilitating ways for people to continue interacting with the former public building and providing a gathering place where community members held movie nights, exercise classes and dance parties and even brought in a community piano.

2 Tender for the properties first appeared in local newspapers in 1886 (See The Globe, 1886), but the Plan of Subdivision was not registered until 1888.

3 Report of the Chief Architect, Sessional Papers of the Government of Canada, 1904, Volume 7.

4 The Globe, New Postal Station "C", June 22, 1903.

5 Toronto Daily Star, "Should be prepared to identify yourself", July 22, 1918.

6 Library and Archives Canada, correspondence between A.M. Gibson and E.J. Underwood, 1941.

7 Community member testimonials, gathered by WQW Community Post Group, July 2022.

Federal Department of Public Works - Office of the Chief Architect

The Department of Public Works architecture branch under the supervision of a Chief Architect was established in 1871 to oversee the design, expenditures, and property management of federal buildings including correctional facilities, armouries, drill halls, court houses, post offices, and other institutional and public buildings.⁸ The centralization of architectural work under one office allowed for the development of a relatively standardized design language for federal buildings across the nation from its outset. During the architecture branch's early years, design commissions would be given to architects in private practice, but by 1881 the department relied almost exclusively on in-house staff. Typically, staff entered the public service early in their careers and received most of their training from the more senior draftsmen rather than outside institutions, resulting in a very cohesive collection of work despite the volume of projects the Department was responsible for.⁹ Although historical records of these buildings are associated with the name of the Chief Architect of the time, Margaret Archibald notes that it is unclear to what level the Chief Architect was involved in the design of any specific project (particularly the smaller and less prestigious ones), as no individual design attributions were given during this time period of the branch's history.¹⁰ Postal Station 'C' was one of over 180 post offices that were designed and constructed under the leadership of Chief Architect David Ewart, who held this role between 1897 and 1914 (Figure 10).

David Ewart was born in 1841 in Scotland, where he began his career working as a joiner for his father's company before pursuing further studies in architecture in Edinburgh. In 1871, he immigrated to Canada with his wife, and almost immediately was able to find employment as a draftsman with the Department of Public Works in Ottawa. By 1879, Ewart was acting as assistant to the inaugural Chief Architect, Thomas Seaton Scott. Upon Scott's retirement in 1881, Ewart briefly took over the head role, but he reverted to the assistant position with the appointment of Thomas Fuller, who held the office of Chief Architect until 1896. Ewart was formally appointed as Chief Architect in November 1897, and during his tenure in the position, he oversaw the construction and/or renovation of several hundred buildings.

Ewart is notable for his work in the Tudor Gothic style, including the Dominion Archives Building (1904-1906, now the Canada War Museum), the Royal Canadian Mint Building (1905-1908), and the Connaught Building (1913-1916), of which the latter was said to be his proudest achievement.¹¹ His long career with the Department of Public Works earned him the Imperial Service Order (post-nominals ISO), which was established in 1902 and awarded to those civil servants in the Commonwealth with a minimum of 25

⁸ Some separation occurred during the 1880s, with a few government departments handling their own architectural needs internally, but notably both the Post Office Department and Department of Customs continued to rely on the services of the Chief Architect's Office (Wright, p.76).

⁹ Archibald, p.9.

¹⁰ Ibid, p.13.

¹¹ Chisholm, p.F7.

years of service.¹² He retired in 1914, though he continued to hold a salary as "dominion consulting architect" until his death in 1921.¹³

Due to the volume of work happening simultaneously across the country and the geographic distances involved, the standard practice of the Department of Public Works was to hire a local architect to supervise the construction and management of their projects. For projects located in Toronto during the early 1900s, this responsibility was frequently given to Samuel George Curry (1854-1942) (Figure 11).¹⁴ Curry first began work as a draftsman for Robert Gage in Kingston, Ontario, but moved to Toronto in 1879 and entered into a partnership with Frank Darling that lasted until 1892. He alternated between working alone and in a series of brief partnerships until 1917, at which point he worked under his own name until his retirement. Curry contributed to the formation of the Ontario Association of Architects in 1890, and also briefly served as an alderman to Toronto City Council in 1902-1903. As the local associate architect, Curry would have been responsible for preparing detailed working drawings according to outline plans and design sketches provided by the Department of Public Works. Opportunities to influence the building's design would have been limited, although in some cases where the construction process required minor alterations to the original plans, suggestions from the supervising architect would have been given consideration. A locally-based Clerk of Works supported the supervising architect during the construction process by ensuring the building specifications were followed and the quality of workmanship was satisfactory.

iii. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The following section provides an architectural description and analysis related to the property which will establish the basis for determining 'Design and Physical Value' according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

The property at 1117 Queen Street West comprises a post office type building designed according to Beaux-Arts principles, stripped to a minimal amount of detailing. This style grew in popularity in North America over the latter half of the 19th century and became one of the favoured architectural styles for the Department of Public Works of Canada under the leadership of Chief Architect David Ewart between 1897 and 1914, particularly following a tour of Europe that he took in 1901 to look at models for public building design.¹⁵ The restrained classical language of the Beaux-Arts style projected a stately image befitting a public building whilst remaining an economical use of public

12 National Archives, UK. Memoranda on the Imperial Service Order, April 8, 1986.

13 Fulton, Gordon W., "Ewart, David," in Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. 15, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed May 31, 2022, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/ewart_david_15E.html

14 The Listing on the Heritage Register identifies Curry as the architect of 1117 Queen Street West, but the archival sources disprove this. Curry was well connected politically and also appears to have had direct influence with the Chief Architect's Office, having provided the recommendation for the hiring of D.A. Hewitt to the branch in 1900, and Hewitt's promotion in 1908 (Archibald, p.8). Archibald notes that the selection of the local supervising architect was often a political appointment, rather than a selection based solely on merit (p.33).

15 Prior to this shift towards a more modest and standardized aesthetic, the designs produced by the Department of Public Works favoured High Victorian Gothic and Arts and Crafts styles.

funds by avoiding superfluous ornamentation. The use of this style for Postal Station 'C' predates a more widespread adoption of a stripped Beaux-Arts language for similar projects by several years. In 1907, five years after Postal Station 'C' was constructed, the Department of Public Works developed some standardized plans for public buildings that closely resemble the building at 1117 Queen Street West (Figure 12), though the number of buildings erected to these plans appears to be relatively limited.¹⁶

Programmatically, the floor plan on the ground floor comprised a large open area with a service counter separating it from a small public lobby. A portion of the second floor was modified in 1904 to include a residential apartment for a caretaker, which existed at least until the 1960s.¹⁷ Only one half of the building footprint below grade was excavated, enough to contain the mechanical services, a brick safe, and a closet.

The massing is roughly square in plan and two stories in height with a flat roof (Figure 13). Surrounded by three public right of ways and a public park, the property is visible from all sides and is clad in red brick throughout with stone detailing. A single bay at each corner projects slightly from the principal massing on all four elevations of the building, with double height pilasters providing further emphasis. A rusticated stone base and metal cornice wrap the entirety of the building, with round arched openings on the ground floor and flat arched windows on the second floor on all four elevations. Three stringcourses of rusticated stone articulate the design of the exterior: the first is at the level of the springline of the arched openings on the ground floor, the second is at the sill level on the second floor, and the third is immediately below the cornice. Both the first and second stringcourses are continuous around the entirety of the building, interrupted only by openings and the double height pilasters. All four elevations are symmetrically composed.

The principal (north) elevation features two flanking entrances as was common for post office buildings of the time (Figure 14). One entrance led to the public lobby, while the second provided access to the work area, second floor, and half basement. Originally, both entrances were accessed by three steps and a shallow landing. At some point during the 1970s or 1980s, the original entrance steps were removed and wider concrete stairs with deeper landings were added, along with ramp access to the public entrance (Figures 15, 16). Secondary pilasters frame the central portion of the façade, giving further prominence to the two corner projections. At the time of construction, the south façade would have been a near copy of the principal elevation on the north, but the cumulative effect of minor alterations to both elevations over the years has reduced the legibility of this. The openings on the southeast corner were bricked in for the installation of a freight elevator in 1960 and the rear porch and canopy have been removed and replaced three times with successively larger versions in 1949, 1960, and 2012 (Figure 17). Two brick chimneys are also symmetrically located on the rear elevation.

The east and west elevations were designed to mirror each other and with the exception of a fire escape stair from the second floor that was added in 1960, they still maintain

¹⁶ Wright, p.83.

¹⁷ "Toronto's Share in the Estimates", Toronto Daily Star, 26 Jul, 1904, p.7. and City of Toronto Building Permits 59706 and 60583 (1960)

this relationship (Figures 18, 19). Based on archival photography, none of the doors and windows are original and they are likely to have been replaced during the 1970s or 1980s, at or around the same time the front stairs and ramp were constructed.

iv. CONTEXT

The following section provides contextual information and analysis related to the property which is the basis for determining 'Contextual Value' according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

The location of the property at 1117 Queen Street West is shown on the map included as Figure 1 in Attachment 1 (Maps and Photographs). The property is located on the south side of Queen Street West, between Abell and Lisgar streets. Separated by Lisgar Street, the adjacent property to the east is the former Queen and Lisgar Library (1115 Queen Street West) completed in 1909 and designated Part IV in 2012. Slightly further east is the Dovercourt YMCA constructed in 1889 (1089 Queen Street West), which was designated Part IV in 1985 (Figures 20, 21). The properties fronting Queen Street West, from Bathurst Street to Dufferin Street, are within the proposed West Queen West Heritage Conservation District and 250 properties within the West Queen West Area were listed on the Heritage Register in December 2020.

A public laneway borders the property to the south. In 2009, a warehouse building on the adjacent property was demolished and replaced with Lisgar Park, completed in two phases between 2015 and 2017. Between the subject property and Abell Street to the west is a narrow lot owned by the City of Toronto. Archival photography shows that this was originally a green space prior to being paved over as a parking lot in the 1950s. As of 2017, it has been reclaimed as open space as part of Lisgar Park.

The area retains a strong relationship to early land development and settlement history. On the north side of Queen Street West, the ad hoc subdivision of the Park Lots resulted in an assortment of late-19th and early-20th century brick commercial buildings with narrow lot frontages. The south side of Queen Street West, originally the Military Reserve, was developed later and parceled off in larger lots for a variety of government institutions, including the Provincial Lunatic Asylum (1850), the Crystal Palace (1858), the Central Prison (1873), and the Mercer Reformatory for Women (1880). Although only remnants of these institutions still exist (for example, the walls around the CAMH grounds), the large, wide lots are a testament to the area's past and evolution. That Postal Station 'C' was able to continue to serve the public in its original use and form for the longest duration among these buildings demonstrates its important role in providing a valued service to the local community.

3. EVALUATION AND APPLICATION OF O.REG 9/06 CRITERIA

The following evaluation applies Ontario Regulation 9/06 made under the Ontario Heritage Act: Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. The criteria are prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, and the City of Toronto also uses these criteria when assessing properties for inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register. There are three categories for a total of nine criteria under O. Reg 9/06. A property may be designated under Section 29

of the Act if it meets one or more of the provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest.

The evaluation table is marked "N/A" if the criterion is "not applicable" to the property or "✓" if it is applicable to the property, with explanatory text below.

DESIGN OR PHYSICAL VALUE

Design or Physical Value	
i. rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method	✓
ii. displays high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit	N/A
iii. demonstrates high degree of scientific or technical achievement	N/A

Rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method

Postal Station 'C' is valued for its design and physical value as an early example of the stripped Beaux-Arts style applied to federal buildings at the beginning of the 20th century. The two-storey square form and massing with rear loading area, brick cladding with stone detailing, and flanking entrances are characteristic of post offices contemporary to this era. The Beaux-Arts influences can be seen in the flat roofline, symmetrical composition of the four elevations, the double height pilasters, the metal cornice, rusticated stone base and stringcourses that wrap the entirety of the building, and the round arched openings on the ground floor and flat-headed openings on the upper floor.

HISTORICAL OR ASSOCIATIVE VALUE

Historical or Associative Value	
i. direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community	✓
ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture	✓
iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community	✓

Direct association with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community

The property at 1117 Queen Street West is valued for its association with the Canadian postal system, which underwent considerable expansion in the late 19th and early-20th centuries to establish a national postal network. Constructed in 1903, Postal Station 'C' helped improve the efficiency of postal service in Toronto by serving the city's west end communities.

Yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture

The property at 1117 Queen Street West has additional associative value for its contribution to the understanding of the historical development and evolution of the West Queen West neighbourhood, with Queen Street West serving as the dividing line between the Park Lots and the Military Reserve that were established in 1793. The large lots on the south side of the street that were gradually parceled out from the Military Reserve lands for institutional use to support the growing City contrast with the ad hoc subdivision and narrower lots on the north side of the street.

Demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community

The property at 1117 Queen Street West is further valued for its association with the architecture branch of the Department of Public Works of Canada, which was formed in 1871 and contributed significantly to establishing a cohesive and recognizable image for federal buildings across the nation. Under the tenure of Chief Architect David Ewart from 1897-1914, the Department of Public Works designed and constructed hundreds of federal buildings across Canada, including over 180 post offices. Postal Station 'C' introduced the modest and stripped down aesthetic that reflected the emphasis on rational and prudent use of public funds, whilst maintaining an appropriate appearance of civic grandeur. The Department of Public Works replicated these ideas in other projects constructed across the country.

CONTEXTUAL VALUE

Contextual Value	
i. important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area	✓
ii. physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings	✓
iii. landmark	✓

Important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area

Located on the south side of Queen Street West, the red brick and stone building at 1117 Queen Street West has contextual value for its contribution to the historical character of the West Queen West area, which is typified by narrow lots with commercial buildings on the north side of the street, and large lots originally held for institutional use on the south side of the street (the former Military Reserve lands). Like several other buildings on the south side of Queen Street West, all four elevations are visible from the public realm. This section of Queen Street West is part of the proposed West Queen West Heritage Conservation District.

Physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings

The contextual value of Postal Station 'C' is also demonstrated by its historical and visual links to its surroundings on Queen Street West, where it contributes to an important collection of institutional buildings along this section of the street, including the neighbouring Queen and Lisgar Library (1115 Queen Street West), the Dovercourt YMCA (1089 Queen Street West), and the extant walls of the former Provincial Lunatic Asylum. These properties are connected through their creation in 1888 when the east and west portions of the Asylum grounds were subdivided and subsequently sold.

Landmark

Postal Station 'C' is considered a local landmark.

CONCLUSION

Staff have completed the Research and Evaluation Report for the property at 1117 Queen Street West and determined that the property meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act under design and physical, historical and associative, and contextual value. As such, the property is a significant built heritage resource.

The property at 1117 Queen Street West has cultural heritage value as an early example of the stripped Beaux-Arts style applied to federal buildings at the beginning of the 20th century. The building was designed by the architecture branch of the Department of Public Works during a time that saw significant improvements to the efficiencies of the postal system and the establishment of a cohesive design language for federal buildings across the country.

Contextually, the subject property at 1117 Queen Street West supports the historic character of the West Queen West neighbourhood and through its links to surrounding institutional properties, it contributes to the understanding of the land development of the former Military Reserve lands. Postal Station 'C' is a local landmark.

The Statement of Significance (Attachment 3) for 1117 Queen Street West, comprises the Reasons for Designation, which is the Public Notice of Intention to Designate.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Maps and Photographs

Attachment 2 – List of Research Sources

Attachment 3 – Statement of Significance (Reasons for Designation)



Figure 1. This location map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the properties are not shown. The red box and arrow mark the location of 1117 Queen Street West. North is at the top of the map (City of Toronto iView Mapping)



Figure 2. 2021 Aerial Photograph of the area; the red box marks the approximate location of the property at 1117 Queen Street West (City of Toronto)



Figure 3. Wadsworth & Unwin's Map of the City of Toronto, compiled and drawn by Maurice Gaviller, 1872. The map illustrates the encroachment of development on the eastern edge of the asylum grounds. The Crystal Palace and Central Prison are also drawn. The arrow marks the approximate location of 1117 Queen Street West. (Ng)

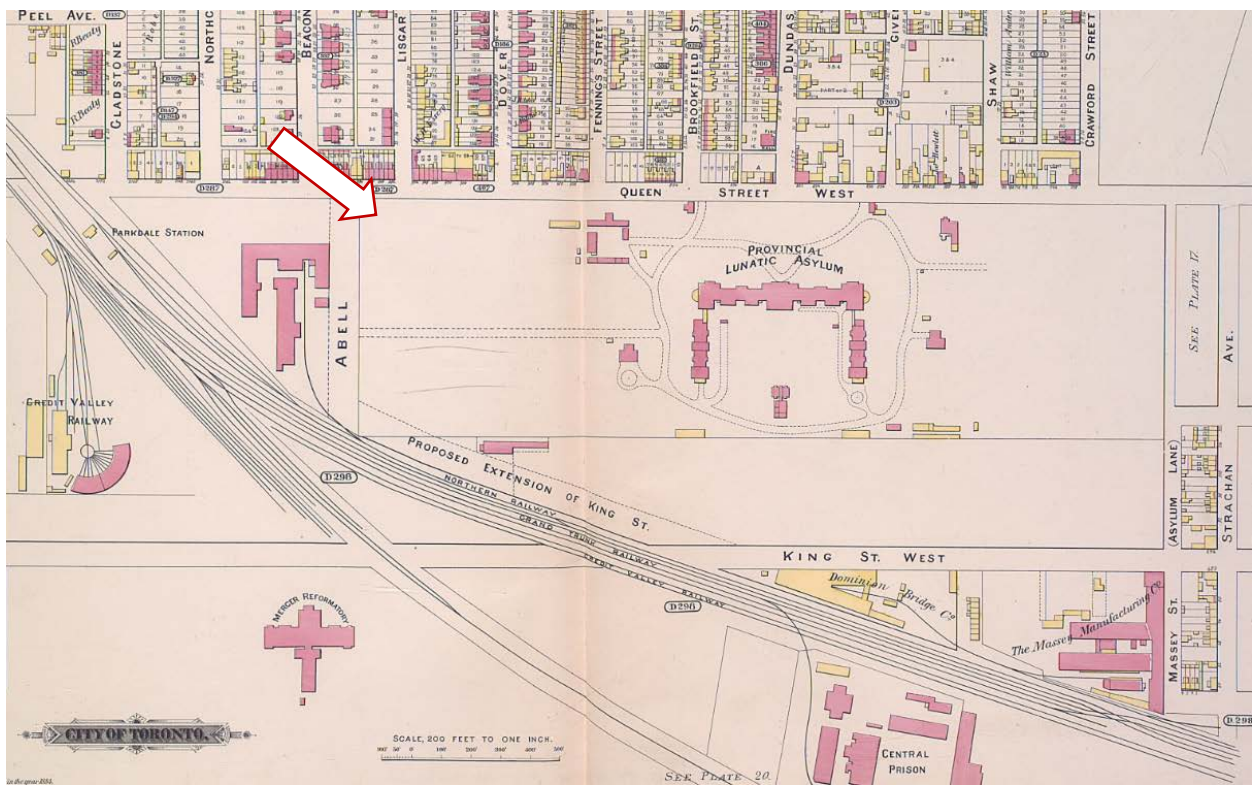


Figure 4. Goad's Atlas Map (1884). The Mercer Reformatory, and industrial facilities including the John Abell Company are shown on the map. The arrow marks the approximate location of 1117 Queen Street West. (Ng)

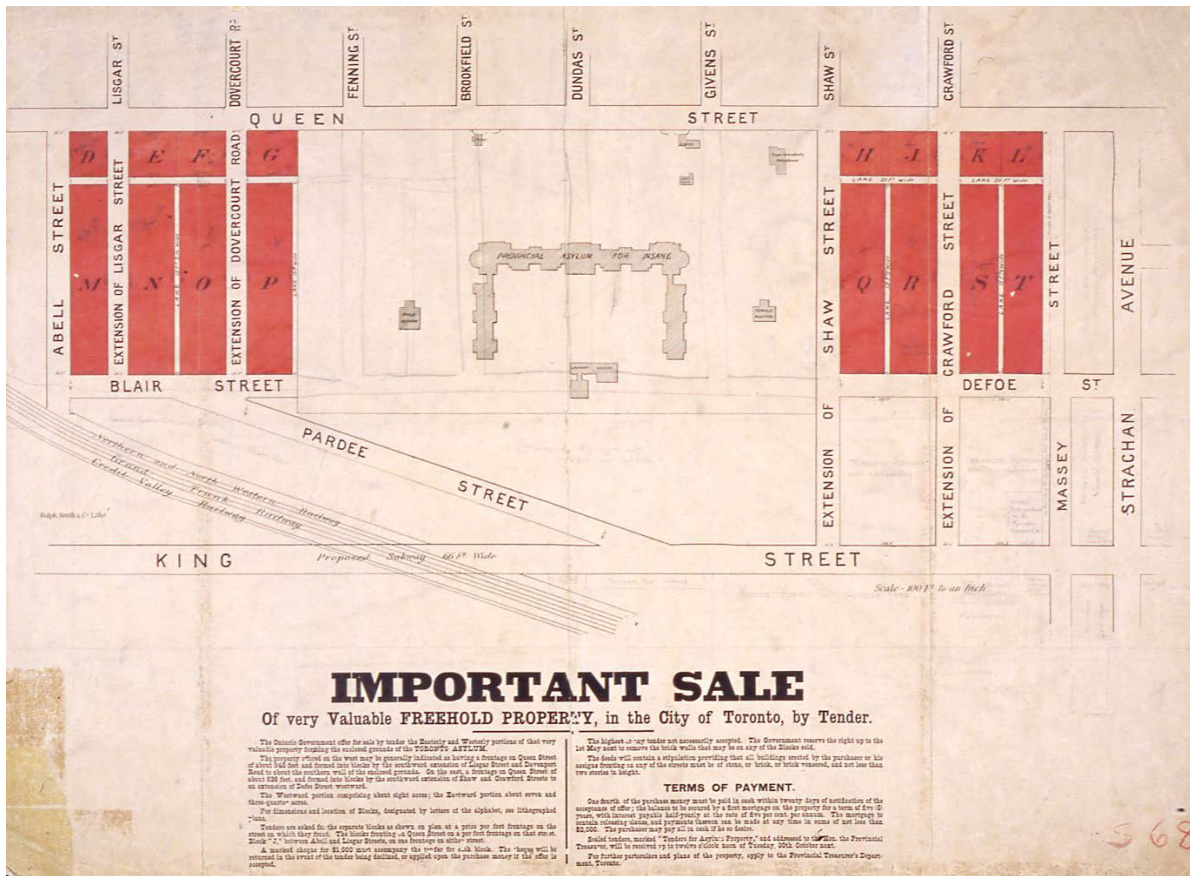


Figure 5: Map showing the Plan of Subdivision of the asylum grounds and freehold property for sale (1889), printed by the Provincial Treasurer's Department. (Ng)

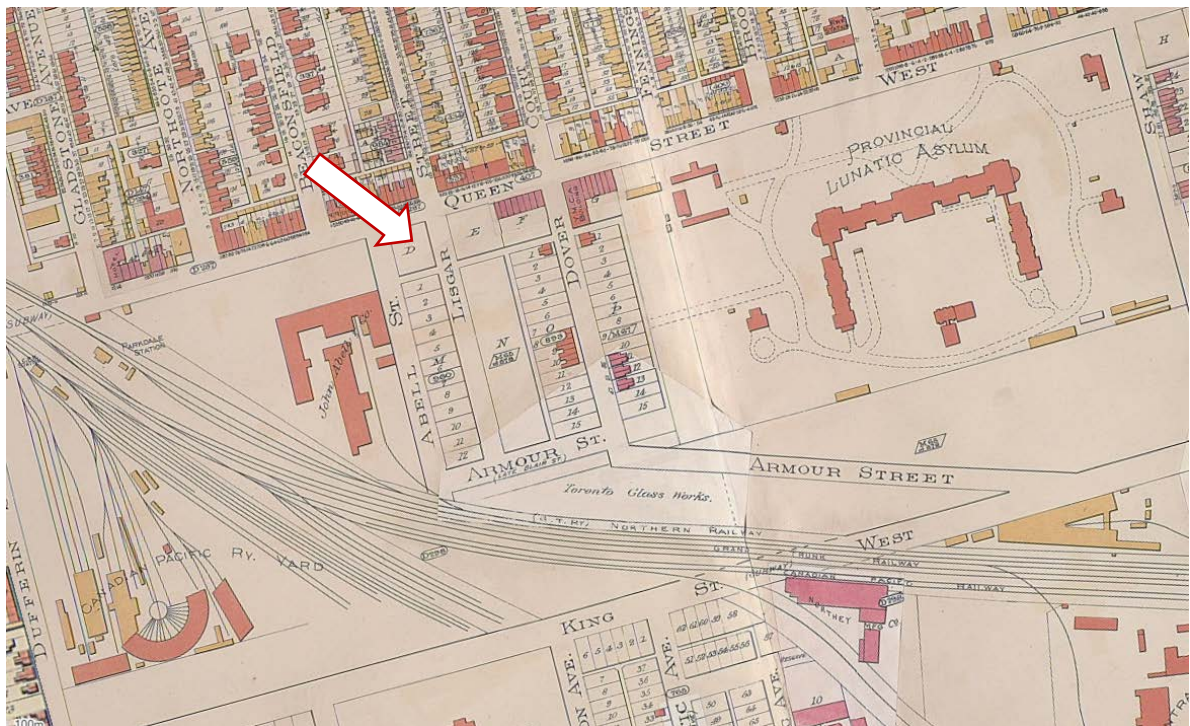


Figure 6. Goad's Atlas Map (1889). Development on the new lots happened swiftly, including construction of the YMCA building on the southeast corner of Dovercourt Road and Queen Street West. The arrow marks the approximate location of 1117 Queen Street West. (Ng)

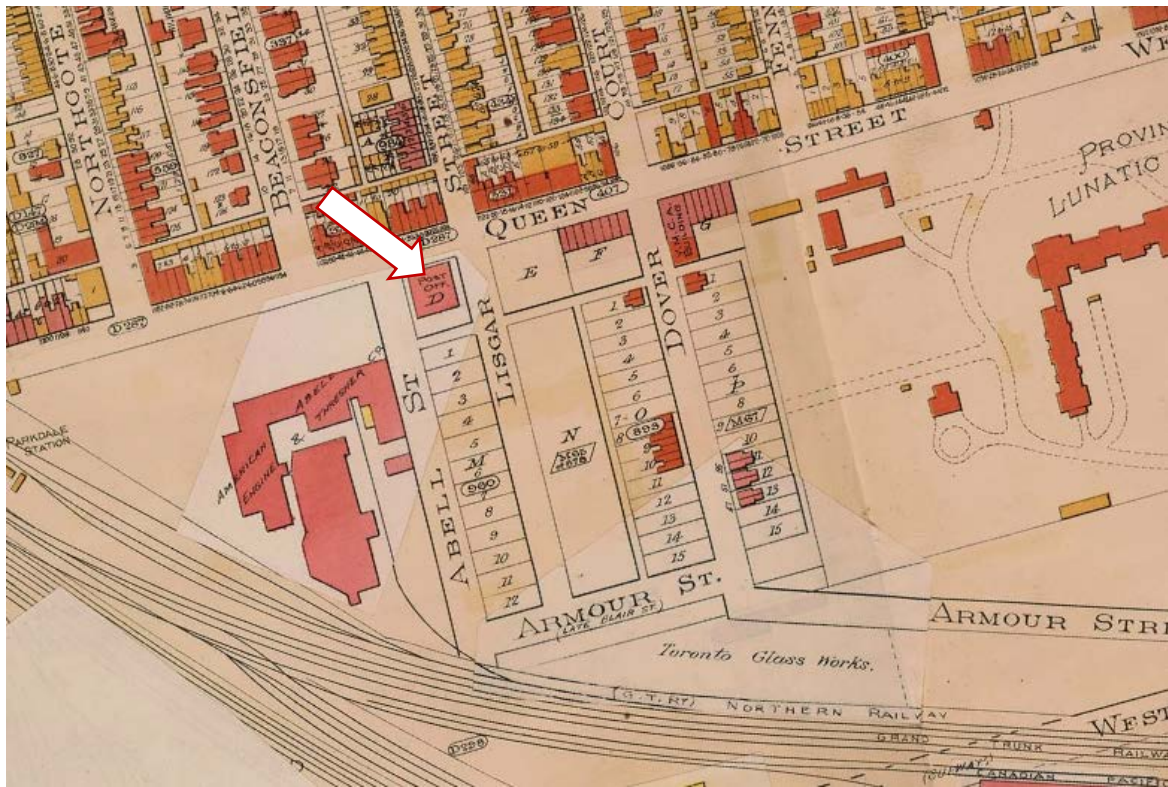


Figure 7. Goad's Atlas Map (1903). Postal Station 'C' is shown as built on the map, indicated by the arrow. (Ng)



Figure 8. 1177 Queen Street West in 1902 showing the building under construction. (Library and Archives Canada)



Figure 9. This photo is undated, but likely dates to c.1902-1903, just after construction was completed. (Library and Archives Canada)

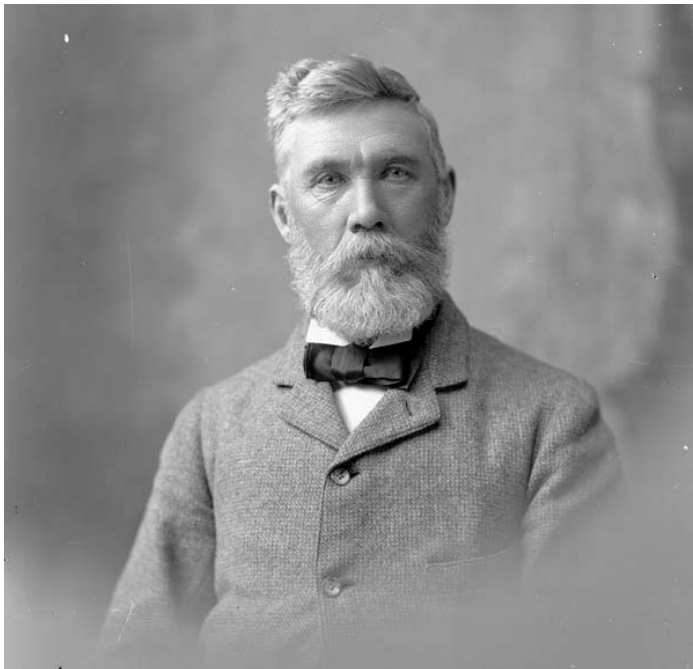


Figure 10. David Ewart served as Chief Architect from 1897-1914. (Library and Archives Canada)

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POSTAL STATION 'B.'

A few minor alterations and repairs were effected under the supervision of S. G. Curry, architect.

POSTAL STATION 'C.'

On May 21, 1902, a contract was entered into for the construction of the building on a site fronting on Queen street, with Lisgar and Bell streets on either side and a lane in rear. It is a 2-story brick building with stone dressings and on a stone basement, the rear one-half of which is excavated and finished as a basement. It has a frontage of 79 feet by a depth of 74 feet 6 inches. There is a brick safe in basement and one on ground floor, and brick partitions in basement. The columns and beams supporting the floors are of iron, the ground floor and first floor partitions and floors as well as the stairs and roof are wood, and the floor of basement concrete. The cornice is metal, and the roof covering of felt, tar and gravel. The basement contains the furnace and fuel-room, a brick safe, a closet-room and the stairway. The ground and first floors are for post office purposes. Heating is by hot water.

Plans, &c., prepared by this department and work supervised by S. G. Curry, architect.

Clerk of works—Wm. Forbes.

Contractors for construction of building—F. D. Brown and Geo. Love.

Contractors for hot water heating system—Harrison & Robertson.

RECEIVER GENERAL'S AND INLAND REVENUE BUILDINGS.

The treasury vault was increased in size, the additional space being taken from the private office adjoining.

All under the supervision of S. G. Curry, architect.

Figure 11. Excerpt from the Chief Architect's Report, included in the Sessional Papers of the Dominion of Canada Volume 7, 1904. S.G. Curry is identified as the supervisory architect on numerous projects.



Figure 12. The post office in Maple Creek, Saskatchewan was built in 1908 to standardized plans by the Department of Public Works. The buildings bears many similarities to the earlier Postal Station 'C', which may have served as a model. (Town of Maple Creek website)



Figure 13. 1927 Photo of north elevation of 1117 Queen Street West. Post offices across Ontario were decorated for the "Diamond Jubilee of Confederation". (Library and Archives Canada)



Figure 14. Principal (north) elevation of 1117 Queen Street West. (Heritage Planning, 2022)



Figure 15. Archival photo of 1117 Queen Street West c.1970s prior to any modifications to the front entrances. (Toronto Historical Board Slide Collection)



Figure 16. Archival photo of 1117 Queen Street West c.1991 after modifications to the front entrances were made to replace the stairs and install ramp access to the building. (Wright, p.88)



Figure 17. Rear (south) elevation of 1117 Queen Street West. (Heritage Planning, 2022)



Figure 18. Side (east) elevation of 1117 Queen Street West, showing the fire escape added in 1960. (Heritage Planning, 2022)



Figure 19. Side (west) elevation of 1117 Queen Street West. (Heritage Planning, 2022)



Figure 20. Context view of 1117 Queen Street West, looking southeast. The YMCA building and Queen and Lisgar Library building are visible on the left of the photograph. (Heritage Planning, 2022)



Figure 21. Context view of 1117 Queen Street West looking southwest. (Heritage Planning, 2022)

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1117 QUEEN STREET WEST
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)

ATTACHMENT 3

The property at 1117 Queen Street West is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value and meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation under all three categories of design, associative and contextual value.

Description

The property at 1117 Queen Street West is located on the south side of Queen Street West between Lisgar Street and Abell Street in the West Queen West neighbourhood, and contains the former Postal Station 'C', a two-storey building completed in 1903. The Beaux-Arts building was designed by the architecture branch of the federal Department of Public Works, with S.G. Curry acting as the local associate architect.

The property is uniquely positioned in that it is surrounded on all four sides by the public realm, facilitating visibility and access to all four of the building's elevations. On the north and east, the property abuts the adjacent street and sidewalk. To the west, a narrow extension of Lisgar Park connects to Queen Street West, and a public laneway running along the south property line has been integrated into the design of Lisgar Park.

The property was listed on the City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties (now the Heritage Register) on June 20, 1973, and is located within the proposed West Queen West Heritage Conservation District. The property is part of a collection of former institutional buildings within the West Queen West area, including the former Queen and Lisgar Library (1115 Queen Street West, designated Part IV in 2012) on the opposite side of Lisgar Street that has been adaptively reused as the Theatre Centre.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Postal Station 'C' is valued for its design and physical value as an early example of the stripped Beaux-Arts style applied to federal buildings at the beginning of the 20th century. The two-storey square form and massing with rear loading area, brick cladding with stone detailing, and flanking entrances are characteristic of post offices contemporary to this era. The Beaux-Arts influences can be seen in the flat roofline, symmetrical composition of the four elevations, the double height pilasters, the metal cornice, rusticated stone base and stringcourses that wrap the entirety of the building, and the round arched openings on the ground floor and flat-headed openings on the upper floor.

The property at 1117 Queen Street West has additional associative value for its contribution to the understanding of the historical development and evolution of the West Queen West neighbourhood, with Queen Street West serving as the dividing line between the Park Lots and the Military Reserve that were established in 1793. The large lots on the south side of the street that were gradually parceled out from the

Military Reserve lands for institutional use to support the growing City contrast with the ad hoc subdivision and narrower lots on the north side of the street.

The property at 1117 Queen Street West is further valued for its association with the architecture branch of the Department of Public Works of Canada, which was formed in 1871 and contributed significantly to establishing a cohesive and recognizable image for federal buildings across the nation. Under the tenure of Chief Architect David Ewart from 1897-1914, the Department of Public Works designed and constructed hundreds of federal buildings across Canada, including over 180 post offices. Postal Station 'C' introduced the modest and stripped down aesthetic that reflected the emphasis on rational and prudent use of public funds, whilst maintaining an appropriate appearance of civic grandeur. The Department of Public Works replicated these ideas in other projects constructed across the country.

Located on the south side of Queen Street West, the red brick and stone building at 1117 Queen Street West has contextual value for its contribution to the historical character of the West Queen West area, which is typified by narrow lots with commercial buildings on the north side of the street, and large lots originally held for institutional use on the south side of the street (the former Military Reserve lands). Like several other buildings on the south side of Queen Street West, all four elevations are visible from the public realm. This section of Queen Street West is part of the proposed West Queen West Heritage Conservation District.

The contextual value of Postal Station 'C' is also demonstrated by its historical and visual links to its surroundings on Queen Street West, where it contributes to an important collection of institutional buildings along this section of the street, including the neighbouring Queen and Lisgar Library (1115 Queen Street West), the Dovercourt YMCA (1089 Queen Street West), and the extant walls of the former Provincial Lunatic Asylum. These properties are connected through their creation in 1888 when the east and west portions of the Asylum grounds were subdivided and subsequently sold.

Postal Station 'C' is considered a local landmark.

Heritage Attributes

Design and Physical Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the value of the property at 1117 Queen Street West as an early example of stripped Beaux-Arts principles applied to a federal building:

- The setback, placement, and orientation of the building on the south side of Queen Street West between Abell and Lisgar streets
- The scale, form and massing of the building that rises two stories above the rusticated stone base, including the projecting corner bays with their double height brick piers
- The materials including the red brick cladding and the brick and stone detailing
- The flat roofline, brick parapet and the metal cornice
- The round arched openings on the ground floor and the flat arched openings on the second floor on all four elevations

- Rusticated stone stringcourses accenting the level of the springline on the ground floor openings and the sill level for the second floor windows, on all four elevations
- The symmetrical organization of the building's four elevations
- On the north elevation, the two flanking entrances raised above grade and accessed by wide stairways and landings
- On the south elevation, the two symmetrically arranged brick chimneys next to the projecting corner bays

Historical and Associative Value

Attributes that contribute to the value of the property as connecting to the building program of the Department of Public Works of Canada:

- On the north elevation, the two flanking entrances (one for public access and one for private access) and the upwardly projecting stone nameplate inscribed with "Postal Station C"
- The use of the stripped Beaux-Arts style that reflected the emphasis on the prudent use of public funds, whilst maintaining an appropriate appearance of civic grandeur on all four elevations

Contextual Value

Attributes that contribute to the value of the property as defining, supporting and maintaining the historic character of the area, being historically, visually, functionally and physically linked to their setting, and being considered a landmark within the West Queen West neighbourhood:

- The two-storey scale, form, and massing, and flat roof
- The materials including the red brick cladding and the brick and stone detailing
- The setback, placement, and orientation of the property on the south side of Queen Street West between Abell and Lisgar streets, and adjacent to Lisgar Park which allows all four elevations of the building to be viewed from the public realm