

Heritage Planner's Statement of Significance for the Canada Permanent Building

Description of Historic Place

Constructed in 1909, the Canada Permanent Building is a three-storey former office building located in central Edmonton. With its brick and sandstone exterior embellished by ornate detailing, it is a striking and rare example of Edwardian Baroque architecture in Edmonton.

Heritage Value

The heritage value of the Canada Permanent Building lies in its associations with notable early 20th-century architect Roland W. Lines and the Canada Permanent Mortgage Company, as well as in its Edwardian Baroque Style architecture.

Residing in Edmonton for only a decade before losing his life in World War I, Lines designed several notable buildings still standing today, including the Union Bank Building (1910), Alex Taylor School (1906), and Strathcona Collegiate Institute (1909). Lines is known for his use of many styles and strong classical themes in his work.

Lines designed the Canada Permanent Building for the Canada Permanent Mortgage Company. Intended to portray strength and stability, the building was advertised as Edmonton's first "fireproof bank," due to its reinforced concrete structure, an innovative building technique at the time. The Canada Permanent Mortgage Company was established in Toronto in 1855 and expanded to Alberta in 1901, filling an important role providing mortgages for farms, residences, and small businesses during a period of rapid growth. The Edmonton branch would become the headquarters for Canada Permanent's operations in Alberta.

The Edwardian Baroque architecture of the Canada Permanent Building is apparent in its grand proportions and rich ornamentation. It was a style that was usually reserved for significant public buildings. The use of this architectural style was testament to Canada Permanent's optimistic outlook on Edmonton's and Alberta's future.

Character-defining Elements

The character-defining elements of the Canada Permanent Building include:

- form, scale, and massing
- flat roof
- reinforced concrete structure

Attachment 2

- sandstone and red brick exterior
- pattern, style and construction of all windows

East Facade

- three distinct bays separated by pilasters with Ionic capitals
- stone balustrade featuring central date stone ("1910") garland and urns at roof level
- stone cornice above the third storey
- heavy second storey cornice with modillions and a central open topped arched pediment
- "CANADA PERMANENT BUILDING" below second storey cornice
- decorative brick and stone detailings, including voussoirs and keystones and winged lighthouse above entrance doorway

South Facade

- facade treatment wrapping the east facade at the southeast corner
- stone cornice above the third storey
- brick parapet with parapet cap
- sandstone sills

Interior

- poured concrete staircase with wrought iron railing and wood handrail