

Heritage Planner's Statement of Significance

Description of Historic Place:

The Canada Packers Chimney Stack is an approximately 38.7 metre (127 feet) high structure located on a single parcel in the Yellowhead Corridor East neighbourhood. Built as part of the larger Canada Packers Plant in 1936, the Chimney Stack is characterized by its terra cotta tile construction, concrete cap and base, and large flue opening. The last surviving remnant of the former Plant, it remains as a landmark to nearby communities in the area.

Heritage Value:

The heritage value of the Canada Packers Chimney Stack consists in its association with the development of the overall Canada Packers Plant in 1936, and the development of a number of other meat packing facilities in the general area. It is the only structure of the former Plant remaining on the site, with the balance of the development on the property being demolished in 1995.

Construction of the new Plant, including the Chimney Stack, began in 1936, in the midst of the Great Depression. With few employment opportunities available at the time, the development of the new facility was welcome to many in Edmonton who were seeking employment. Mayor Joseph Clarke attended the sod-turning ceremony, which was held on March 16, 1936. The original Plant complex was designed by Eric R. Arthur, who was head of architecture at the University of Toronto at the time. Arthur was assisted by A.P.C. Adamson, another Toronto-area architect. The design of the complex was considered an excellent example of the International Modernist style. It was considered such a fine example of the style that it was awarded a Gold Medal of Merit by the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and the Ontario Association of Architects in 1936. A local Edmonton firm, Bird Construction, was awarded the contract for the construction of the Plant, which employed upwards of 400 tradesmen at one point.

The overall complex included a power plant, refrigeration plant, main abattoir, meat packing areas, a safety and quality testing laboratory, facilities for smoking and pickling meat, cellars for curing hides, and a vegetable oil refining facility. The Chimney Stack itself was fed from three Babcock & Wilcox natural gas-fired boilers that generated steam for the sterilization of equipment, as well as heat for the complex, an innovative approach at the time. The Stack was approximately 38.7 metres (127 feet) high, making it a significant landmark in north Edmonton at the time. It was constructed entirely of structural terracotta tiles, with a concrete cap and base, a large flue opening, and featured a tapered design. The Plant began operations in September 1936. The official opening was held on November 4, 1936, with Premier William Aberhart and Mayor Joseph Clarke in attendance. The peak production years of the plant were focused in the 1950s through the 1970s.

Character Defining Elements

The character-defining elements of the Canada Packers Chimney Stack include such features as:

- mass, form, scale, and style;
- square terracotta tile construction (referred to as structural terracotta);
- large flue opening, with some brick elements;
- concrete cap and base; and
- structural remnants of foundations from former adjacent buildings of the Canada Packers Plant.