

Heritage Planner's Statement of Significance

Description of Historic Place

The Douglas Manor apartment building is a three-storey, brick clad structure at the southeast corner of 83 Avenue and 108 Street in the Garneau neighbourhood of Edmonton. The building was originally constructed in circa 1914 as a rooming house. It was then used as a seminary and university dormitory building, and as an orphanage for many years. It was eventually converted to an apartment building in 1941, and remains as such to this day.

Heritage Value

The heritage value of Douglas Manor, lies in its use as a prominent residential building that has accommodated a variety of owners, occupants and uses over the course of 104 years.

Douglas Manor is associated with the development of the city of Edmonton in the First World War period, where numerous rooming houses and apartment buildings were constructed to accommodate a growing population. It has maintained its original use as a multi-inhabitant residential facility for 104 years.

Douglas Manor is also associated with the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton, when the building was known as Neuman Hall and used as the Diocesan Seminary, the headquarters of Bishop Emile Legal, OMI, predecessor of Archbishop O'Leary. Reportedly, it was also used as a residence for university students between 1918 and 1922. In 1923, it was converted to an orphanage known as St. Mary's Home for Boys, operated by the Sisters of Providence and the Women's Catholic League of Edmonton, and remained as such between 1923 to 1941 when the building was sold and the orphanage moved to a larger facility. The building was renovated to become an apartment building known as Robert Mansion until the 1970s, when it then became known as Douglas Manor. There were numerous alterations to the building in 1941, including the addition of brick cladding to the exterior and modifications to the window openings and room layouts to support the conversion from a rooming house to an apartment building.

Douglas Manor is a good example of the Edwardian Style of architecture with simplified classical details such as the pressed metal cornice with wood-clad parapet above. Design elements include the brick cladding, regular fenestration pattern on all four elevations, and an elevated front entrance on 83 Avenue. The brick cladding is applied in a common bond format, with vertical soldier courses running at each storey above the windows. The north and south elevations feature window openings in a double format, while window openings on the east

and west elevations are in a single format. The window openings typically feature flat arches with vertical brick, as well as brick sills. Given its conversion and renovations in 1941 when the brick was added and the windows modified, it should be described as having evolved into an unusually late example of the Edwardian Style.

Character-defining Elements

The character-defining elements as expressed in the form, scale, and massing of Douglas Manor include:

- Wood frame construction, three storey height, in late Edwardian style
- Distinctive corner location with broad exposure to the intersecting streets
- Flat roof
- Original pressed-metal perimeter cornice with pressed-metal brackets
- Original cedar bevel siding forming a continuous parapet above the pressed-metal cornice
- Clinker-type brick cladding on all elevations in a common bond format
- Decorative brick bands and soldier courses on all elevations
- Arrangement of single and double window openings
- Brick entrance podium, steps, landing and side walls on the north elevation
- Several basement wood single-hung windows that likely date from the 1941 conversion
- One basement wood inward-opening awning window that likely dates from the original 1914 construction