

# Conservation Plan, 15-17 Oblats Avenue, East Ottawa



**Revision # 2 August 2022**

**Prepared For: Forum Asset Management**

**Prepared By: Commonwealth Historic Resource Management**



**Forum**

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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 Introduction

The former Convent of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus at 15-17 Oblates Ave is part of a complex of structures and institutions that are part of the distinctive character of the Old Ottawa East neighbourhood. The Convent has been listed on the Municipal Register of Historic Places, prior to the proposed redevelopment of the property. A rationale for the listing of the building on the municipal register provides a summary statement of the significance (SOS) of the property outlining the architectural and associative values. The character-defining features or heritage attributes of the building are not listed in the SOS; however, heritage attributes that will be retained are included in this report.

The development proposal is for the adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of the existing building for new residential and associated amenity uses (refer to design brief). A new addition to the existing building is proposed to the north fronting onto Springhurst Avenue. An existing statue will be relocated as part of the proposed redevelopment. A clearer understanding of the phased construction history of the former convent is also provided in this report.

A site visit was undertaken on March 7, 2022, by John Stewart and Ian Hunter. The site was largely inaccessible due to security fencing encircling the property; however, the north-west corner of the property was accessed from Springhurst Avenue. The interior of the building was not accessed. The weather conditions at the time of the visit and accumulated snow obscured portions of the two entrances on Oblats Avenue and the base of the statue.

The City has requested a Conservation Plan be developed for the property the contents of which are outlined below. The Conservation Plan must:

- Describe how the heritage value of a resource will be protected during the development process;
- Include a summary of conservation principles and how they will be used must be included. Conservation principles may be found in publications such as Parks Canada's "Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada " and "Eight Guiding Principles in the Conservation of Historic Properties," published by the Ontario Ministry of Culture. (Both publications are available online.);
- Recommend the conservation treatment category – preservation, rehabilitation, restoration - appropriate to each resource of heritage value within the property, including the landscape;
- Outline how the cultural heritage resource[s] are to be managed after the completion of the project;
- A Conservation Plan must contain current information on the condition of the building and recommendations on its ongoing maintenance. These recommendations will be based on the "Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada" as amended from time to time, and adopted City Council in 2008;

- A Conservation Plan may also contain guidance on the following, where appropriate: public access, signage, lighting, interpretation, landscaping, heritage recording, and use.

The following documents were used in the preparation of this report:

Rationale for the Inclusion of 15 Oblates on the Municipal Heritage Register;  
Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, Second Edition, 2010;  
Pre-Application Consultation Meeting Notes, 15 Oblats Avenue, PC2021-0140, Thursday, May 27, 2021;  
Site Plan, 15 Oblats Ave., Woodman Architects & Associates, Dated August 18, 2022; and,  
Floor Plans and Elevations, Woodman Architects & Associates, Dated August 18, 2022.

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## **1.2 List of Reference Documents Used in the preparation of this Report**

- *“Rationale for Listing on the City of Ottawa’s Heritage Register,”* No Author Identified **Submission to the City** February 2021.
- *“Opinion on Register and Designation Merit,”* **Robert Martin** 18/02/2018
- Plans Elevations and landscape Plan prepared by Woodward Architects 1.20. 22

## **1.3 Evolution of the Existing Built Form and Heritage Attributes**

The existing built form is the result of several additions to the 1914 structure in circa 1926, 1940, and 1954 (Figure 1). The original exterior walls of the three-storey structure completed in 1914, are still evident behind the central projecting polygonal bay of the Oblats façade. The polygonal bay is assumed to have been added during the 1940 or 1954 expansion. The 1914 structure extends through to the centrally located 1954 wing fronting onto Springhurst where portions of the east and west exterior walls and original fenestration pattern are still evident although altered (Figure 2).

The exterior walls of the circa 1926 chapel addition to the west of the central bay are evident on the north and south facades. The 1926 addition consists of the five bays and existing entrance to the west of the central projecting bay with the tall semi-circular headed window openings with the coloured glass in the sash (Figure 3).



*Figure 1: Aerial view illustrating the existing built form and landscape context of the development site – 15 Oblats Avenue. The former Convent is a four-storey brick clad masonry building in a T-plan constructed in four or more phases – 1914, 1926, 1940, and 1954. Building arrowed. Source: Geottawa*

The 1940 and 1954 additions transformed the complex extending along Oblats Avenue with additions to the east and the west of the 1914 and 1926 structures. The 1926 Chapel with the five bays was retained and an extension with the Palladian style windows with coloured glass was added to form a transept, and a second floor was added above. The 1926 side entrance was retained, and the existing decorative pre-cast or stone door surround and the steps and landing were installed circa 1940. The original main entrance to the 1914 structure was removed and the central polygonal brick clad bay constructed in 1940 or 1954. A new entrance to the east of the central bay was added during the 1940 expansion that is assumed to include all of the structure to the east of the 1914 structure and polygonal central bay. In 1954 the last addition was constructed to form a T plan. The addition was connected to the rear elevation of the 1914 structure.



Rear view of the original Sacré Coeur Convent 1914

*Figure 2: Rear view from the north-west to the back of the 1914 convent. Note the three-bay façade with a central entrance and a bell tower on the east side of the building that can be seen in the 1926 photograph (Figure 3). The exterior walls are evident in the ground floor plan (Figure 11). The mansard roof was removed during the 1940 expansion and the third-floor brick walls were added. Source: Old Ottawa East website.*

## 1.4 Background History of the Oblats Convent and the Sisters of the Sacred Heart

**Name & Address:** Sisters of the Sacred Heart Convent 15 -17 Oblats Avenue, Ottawa.

**Construction Dates:** 1915, Addition 1940, and back wing 1954.

**Original Owner:** Sisters of the Sacred Heart.

The Convent at 15-17 Oblats Avenue can be described as a large, sprawling, robust example of institutional architecture that extends through the block to Springhurst Avenue. The evolution of the building's construction is a feature marked by a series of building campaigns that responded to

additional space requirements that can be identified and are part of its character. It was initially constructed in 1915 with additions in 1940, and the back wing on Springhurst Avenue added in 1954.

The history of property is linked to the Oblate fathers, which maintained a close association with the Sisters of the Sacred Heart. Both religious Orders were teaching Orders. The original convent was located next to the Deschâtelets Building where the sisters provide domestic services. Following a fire that destroyed the convent the sisters built the present convent at 15 – 17 Oblats Avenue.

The Sisters arrival in Ottawa in 1902 established their presence in North America. They initially provided domestic services to the Oblate Fathers. By 1962, the Order had grown to where it regrouped forming two “religious provinces”: The Province of Notre Dame-du-Cap (Ontario) headquartered on Oblats Avenue; and the Province of Notre Dame-du-Sacre-Coeur in St. Hubert (Quebec). At the Oblats Convent, their numbers expanded from the initial five sisters to two hundred and forty-six Sisters, thirty-one Novices twenty-five students and two pensioners. They continued the domestic services until 1969 but were also actively engaged in education and over time had expanded into Texas, the lower Ottawa Valley, Montreal, and their participation in the Federally sponsored residential school program in Canada’s northern communities have direct associations with themes of education and an institution that is significant to the broader Canadian/ North American community.

One of the most significant contributions to the convent’s thematic value is the furthering the role of women and their impact on the community through education. The Order has been a significant institution through which women have been able to exercise leadership and have an impact on their community. It is part of the history of Catholic women in Ottawa and deserves recognition.

The convent represents a significant contribution to Franco-Ontarian institutions through its educational mandate in schools and community services in Eastern Ontario and Northern Canada as well as the United States. Its contributions strengthened Francophone institutions that helped to maintain Ottawa’s bilingual character.

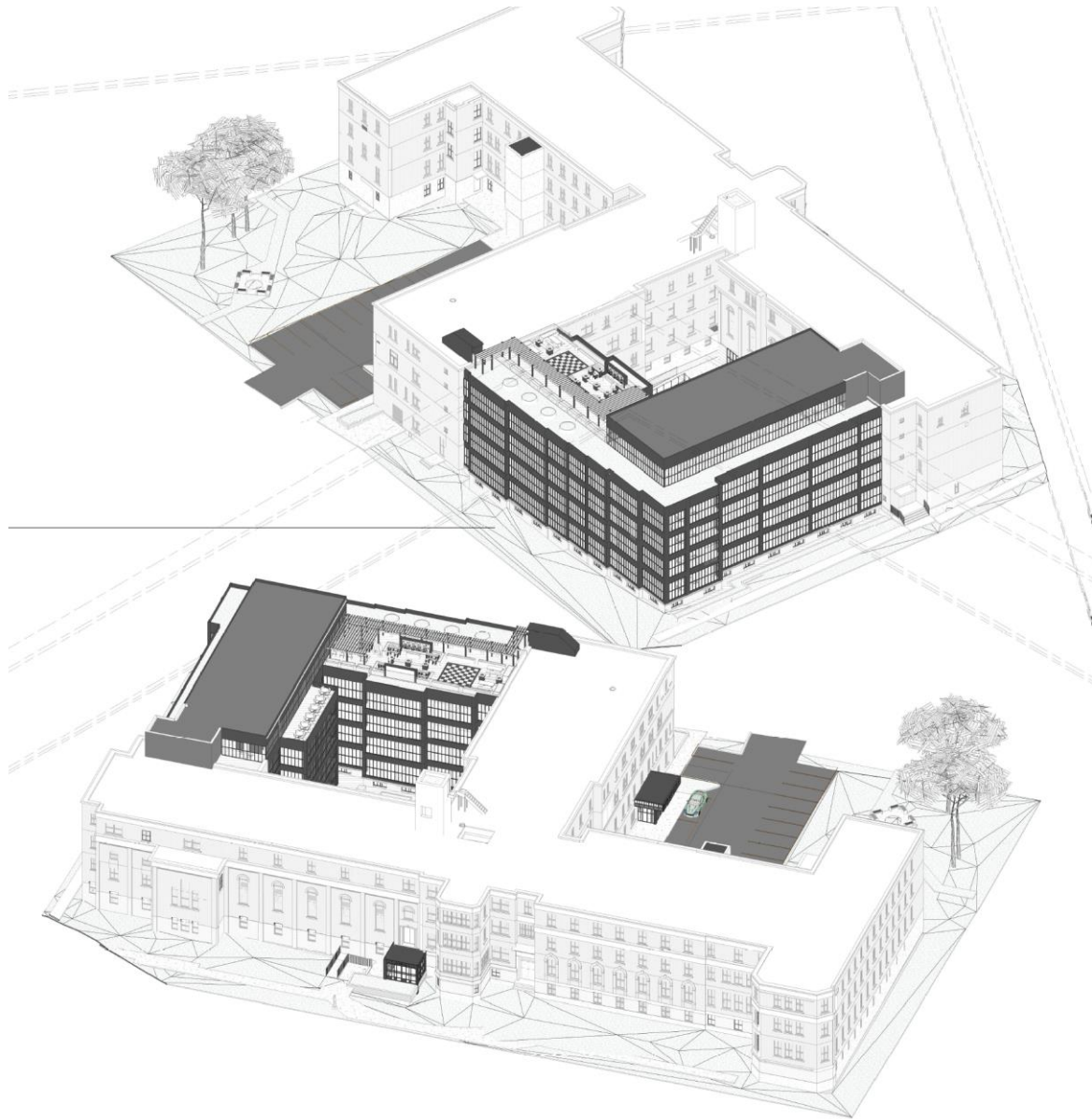
The property has contextual value as part of the Ottawa East landscape contributing to, maintaining, and supporting the character or development of the area. Both the Convent’s history and physical location represents a strong relationship with the more imposing Deschâtelets building, bordering the Grand Allee. The convent is considered a distinct, physical marker of the Order in Ottawa.

It is acknowledged that much of the historical relationship in the public realm has shifted as has the public realm of the entire Oblate’s cultural heritage landscape. However, the redevelopment of the Deschâtelets Building as a Catholic Francophone school will continue to support and strengthen the original character of this site as an educational precinct as does the university.





*Figure 3: 1926 photograph of the convent. The 1914 structure is to the right and the circa 1926 addition to the left of the image. Note the three-bay form of the 1914 structure, and brick extension for the bell tower to the right. The circa 1926 addition with five window bays with the coloured glass in the sash to the side of the entrance. Note the statue with extended arms in front of the circa 1926 chapel addition. The 1940 chapel extension featured the same brick detailing – pilasters dividing the wall into bays with a stepped brick pattern at the eave. Source: Old Ottawa East website.*



*Figure 4: Axonometric views of the existing building complex from the south along Oblats Avenue and the north along Springhurst Avenue. Source: Woodman Architects and Associates 2022.*





Figure 4: Partial view of the south façade to the east of the central bay. Source: Commonwealth



Figure 5: Partial view of the south façade to the west of the central bay. Source: Commonwealth



Figure 6: View of the east entrance on the south façade and decorative masonry window detailing on the 1940 addition. The exterior wall of the 1914 structure is to the left of the entrance. The entrance is being retained as part of the rehabilitation with modifications to meet accessibility requirements. Source: Commonwealth





*Figure 7: View to the west entrance on the south façade installed circa 1940. Note the round headed windows with the coloured glass in the sash that dates to circa 1926. The entrance and round headed window assemblies are a heritage attribute of the building that will be retained on the south and north facades. Source: Commonwealth*



*Figure 8: View of the statue set on a pedestal in a landscaped environment. The plan calls for its relocation to the dedicated park on the east side of the site. Source: Commonwealth*





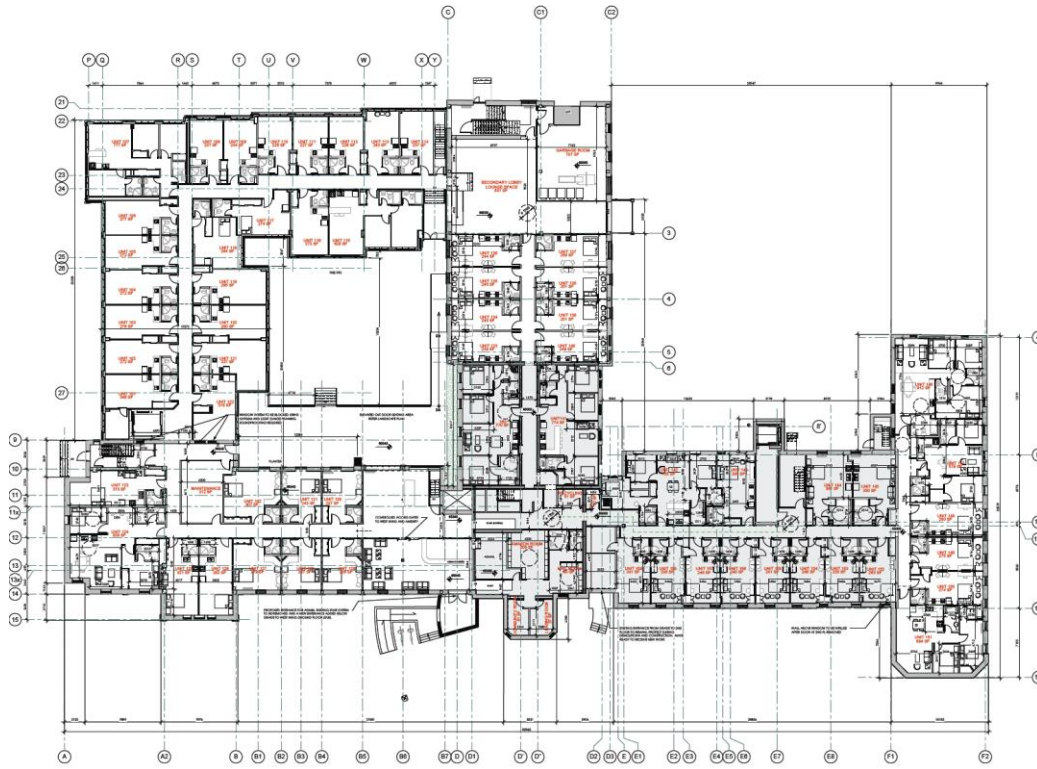
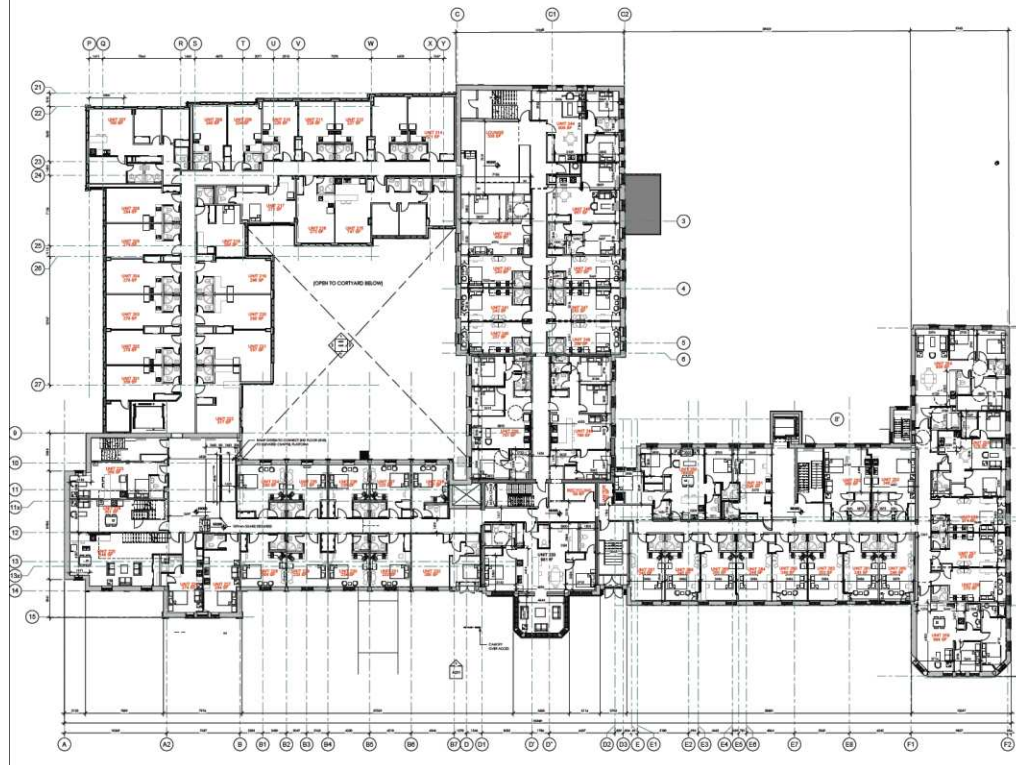


Figure 10 and 11: Ground & Second floor plan of the proposed redevelopment. The 1914 structure is evident in the plan forming the central core of the complex. Source: Woodman Architects and Associates August 18, 2022.



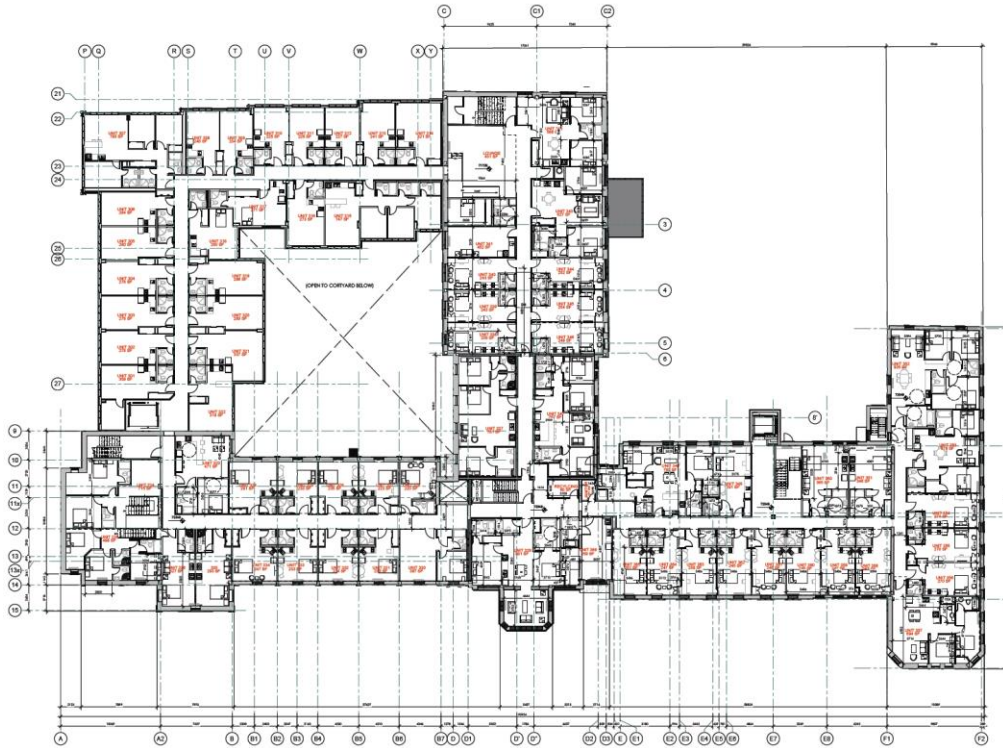
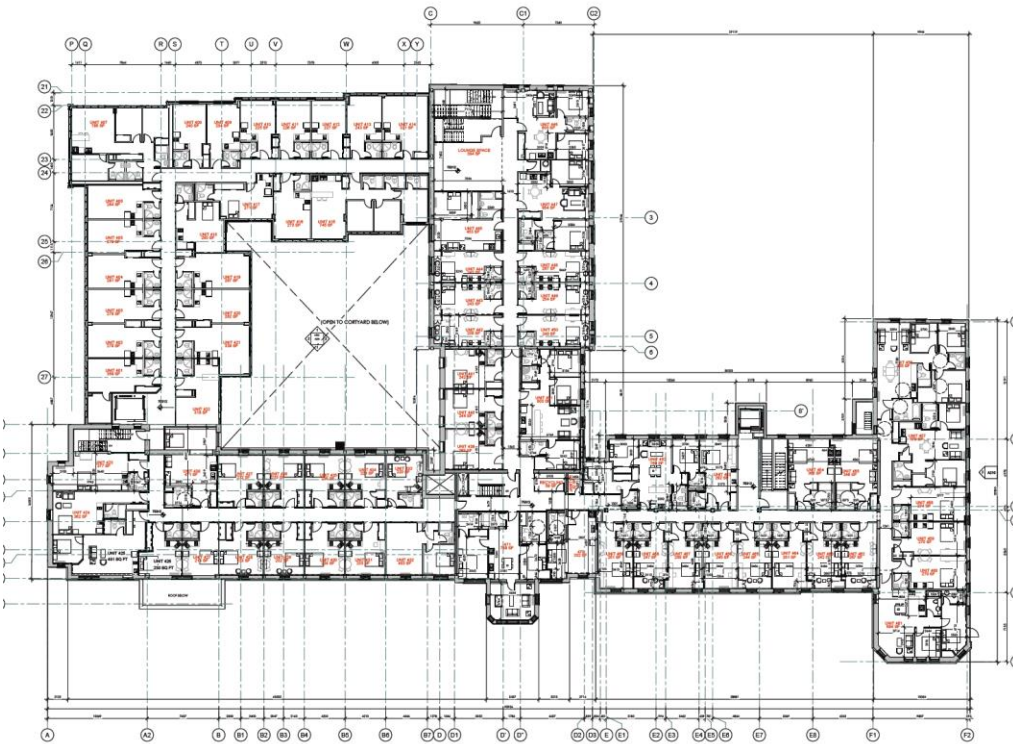


Figure 12 and 13: Third & Fourth floor plans of the proposed redevelopment. Source: Woodman Architects and Associates, August 18, 2022.



## 2.0 STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE

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The rationale for listing the property on the Heritage Register identifies the primary heritage values and attributes of the property. Source: City of Ottawa

### 2.1 Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

#### Description of Place

As noted in the early versions of the Old Ottawa East Secondary Plan, the Convent of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus at 15 Oblates Ave is part of a complex of structures and institutions that are part of the distinctive character of the Old Ottawa East neighbourhood. These include the St Paul University campus, the Deschâtelets building, the Convent and the Immaculata High School cluster of buildings. Together, these structures can be seen as a built heritage cultural landscape around which and through (with the Greystone development project) the Old Ottawa East has grown.

#### Architectural Values

The Convent structure as it exists today is a sprawling but modestly designed institutional building that has evolved since its initial construction to accommodate the changing needs of the Order. In addition to accommodation and spiritual spaces for the Sisters and the training of novitiates, the building has been a boarding school and a long-term care facility for elderly members of the Order.

In the original OOE Community Design Plan, it is variously defined as part of "the Heritage, Institutional core" (p 13), a "minor axial view" (P 37) and along with the Deschâtelets building as structures for redevelopment to "new uses, overtime, preserving the main features while allowing renovations that ensures their utility" (p 23).

#### Associative Values

Both its history and its physical location represent a strong relationship with the more imposing Deschâtelets building, bordering The Grand Allee and the former open space between the Deschâtelets building and Main Street. The existence of the Convent recognizes the origins of Old Ottawa East but also allows current and future residents to understand the physical evolution of the community. And the convent structure does serve as one of the landmarks in Old Ottawa East.

The Convent is a distinct, physical marker of the Order in Ottawa. Their arrival in Old Ottawa East in 1902 established their presence in North America and they subsequently expanded in Texas, the lower Ottawa Valley, Montreal and in communities throughout Canada's north. Originally, they provided domestic services to the Oblate Fathers. The history of the property is linked to the Oblate fathers, which maintained a close association with the Sisters of the Sacred Heart. The



original convent was located next to the Deschâtelets Building. Following a fire that destroyed the convent the sisters built the present convent at 15 – 17 Oblats Avenue. The evolution and expansion of the convent followed a similar pattern to the Deschâtelets Building marked by a series of building campaigns that responded to additional space requirements as the order grew.

By 1962, the Order had grown to where it regrouped forming two “religious provinces”: the Province of Notre Dame-du-Cap (Ontario) headquartered on Oblats Avenue; and the Province of Notre Dame-du-Sacre-Coeur in St. Hubert (Quebec). At the Oblate convent, their numbers had expanded from the initial 5 sisters to 246 Sisters, 31 Novices 25 students and 2 pensioners. They continued the domestic services until 1969 but were also actively engaged in education and over time had expanded into Texas, the lower Ottawa Valley, and Montreal.

## **2.2 Description of Heritage Attributes**

The following attributes were prepared by Commonwealth as a means of defining the heritage Values of the property embodied within the spirit of place:

### **Tangible Values:**

- Views of the covenant from various locations along Oblats Avenue and the grounds of the Greystones property as well as views from Springhurst Avenue specifically from the east with the mature park setting at the intersection of Springhurst Avenue.
- The existing evolved built form, its positioning on the site, distinct but framing the Oblats lands;
- A variety of fenestration patterns supporting and helping to interpret the evolve built form;
- Round headed window openings and window assemblies on the north and south elevations that formed the chapel;
- The use of traditional Ottawa red brick masonry finishes on the exterior walls including the brick finishes and detailing;
- Decorative masonry finishes on the two entrances, door assemblies, and landings;
- Decorative masonry details on the windows to the east of the main entrance;
- The statue and base in the north-west quadrant of the site.

### **Intangible Values** include:

- The Order has been a significant institution through which women have been able to exercise leadership and have an impact on their community. It is part of the history of Catholic women in Ottawa.
- The long-standing relationship of the two religious orders, and the evolution of a teaching centre marked by the more imposing Deschâtelets building, bordering the Grand Allee and the former open space between the Deschâtelets building and Main Street.
- The evolution of the convent followed a similar pattern to the Deschâtelets Building documenting a series of building campaigns that responded to additional space requirements and funding.

The role of both religious orders as agents of the federal government in the education of Indigenous children throughout northern Canada. Both the Oblate fathers and the Sisters

- of the Sacred Heart of Jesus religious orders were teaching orders. Their participation in the residential school program in northern communities has direct associations with themes of education and Catholic institutions that are significant to the broader Canadian/ North American Aboriginal community. As part of the Catholic Church both the Oblate Fathers and the Sister's of the Sacred Heart's role in the residential school program is considered an ill-conceived mandate recently described as government sponsored genocide.
- The convent represents a significant contribution to Franco-Ontarian institutions through its educational mandate in schools and community services in Eastern Ontario and Northern Canada as well as the United States. Its contributions strengthened francophone institutions that helped to maintain Ottawa's bilingual character.

## 3.0 CONSERVATION PLAN - STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

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### 3.1 Conservation Approach

The statement of significance for the property provides the architectural and associated values of the property (Section 3.0). The statement does not list the heritage attributes of the property; however, a tentative list of heritage attributes is provided below.

#### Description of Heritage Attributes (Commonwealth)

The following attributes embody the cultural heritage value of the property:

The existing evolved built form and fenestration patterns;

Masonry finishes on the exterior walls including the brick finishes and detailing;

Decorative masonry finishes on the two entrances, door assemblies, and landings;

Decorative masonry details on the windows to the east of the main entrance;

Round headed window openings and window assemblies on the north and south elevations that formed the chapel;

The statue and base in the north-west quadrant of the site.

The role of the Sister of the Sacred Heart in education.

The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places is used to identify and assess the appropriate conservation treatments for the heritage attributes.

### 3.2 Conservation Definitions

**Conservation:** all actions or processes that are aimed at safeguarding the character-defining elements of an historic place to retain its heritage value and extend its physical life. This may involve Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, or a combination of these actions or processes.

**Preservation:** the action or process of protecting, maintaining, and/or stabilizing the existing materials, form, and integrity of an historic place, or of an individual component, while protecting its heritage value.

Consider Preservation as the primary treatment when:

(a) Materials, features, and spaces of the historic place are essentially intact and convey the historic significance, without extensive repair or replacement.

(b) Depiction during a particular period in its history is not appropriate; and,

(c) Continuation or new use does not require extensive alterations or additions.

**Rehabilitation:** the action or process of making possible a continuing or compatible contemporary use of an historic place, or an individual component, while protecting its heritage value. Rehabilitation can include replacing missing historic features. The replacement may be an accurate replica of the missing feature, or it may be a new design compatible with the style, era, and character of the historic place.

Consider Rehabilitation as the primary treatment when:

- (a) Repair or replacement of deteriorated features is necessary.
- (b) Alterations or additions to the historic place are planned for a new or continued use; and,
- (c) Depiction during a particular period in its history is not appropriate.

**Restoration:** involves accurately revealing, recovering, or representing the state of an historic place or individual component as it appeared at a particular period in its history, while protecting its heritage value.

Consider Restoration as the primary treatment when:

- (a) An historic place's significance during a particular period in its history significantly outweighs the potential loss of existing, non-character-defining materials, features, and spaces from other periods.
- (b) Substantial physical and documentary or oral evidence exists to accurately carry out the work; and,
- (c) Contemporary additions or alterations are not planned.

### **3.3 Conservation Approach for Heritage Attributes**

#### **Built Form and Fenestration Pattern**

Preservation is the primary conservation treatment for the redevelopment of the property to accommodate a new use. The existing built form, materials and assemblies of the existing building are being retained. An L shaped five-storey addition is proposed in the north-west quadrant of the site in a non-character-defining area of the site. The addition links to the west elevation of the 1954 wing and connects back to the north elevation of the circa 1940 chapel addition forming an interior courtyard. A one-storey addition is proposed above the four-storey wing to the east of the central bay to provide a roof top amenity area. The addition is set back of the south façade and consists of a glazed aluminium curtain wall with a steel and glass railings.

The existing fenestration pattern will be preserved ensuring the heritage values associated with its past use are retained. The interior of the existing building will be rehabilitated to accommodate a new use.

#### **Masonry Walls**

The primary conservation treatment for the exterior masonry wall assemblies is preservation. The brick clad exterior walls are in good condition with a few exceptions. Pre-cast concrete and decorative pre-cast windowsills and other detailing will be preserved. Deteriorated pre-cast concrete sills will be replaced in kind. A detailed survey of the exterior masonry walls and windowsills will be required to inform the detailed conservation plan.

A strategy for the insulation of the exterior walls needs to be developed for the various building phases. The exterior masonry wall assemblies in the additions that postdate 1940 probably consists of an exterior brick with a terracotta tile or concrete block backup wall.



Figure 12: View of the building complex from the grounds of Greystone Village. Although a collage of building periods the red brick provides a unifying element as do the vertical fenestration. Source: Robertson Martin 2021.

### Entrance Assemblies

The primary conservation treatment for the two entrances fronting onto Oblats is preservation. The decorative pre-cast or masonry door surrounds will be preserved. The door assemblies including the frame, doors, and transom windows will be preserved. The existing landing and steps on the east and west entrance assemblies will be preserved with modifications to meet accessibility and building code requirements.

*Requirement: A detailed condition survey of the assemblies is required to identify materials and conservation treatments.*



Figure 13: Entrance door off of Oblats Avenue.





redevelopment of the property. A private contracting firm such as Heritage Grade will be contracted to undertake the work, as well as providing a condition assessment, and undertaking any conservation treatments that are required prior to installing the statue.

**Landscape Design, Statue Relocation, and Commemoration**

The statue will be placed in storage during the construction phase of the development where it will be restored to its original condition. The relocation of the statue along the Springhurst Avenue bend is a highly visible parklike setting accessible to the public. The statue area is designed as a passive contemplative landscape that maintains the essence of the prayer garden that currently location. The Ottawa East Secondary Plan identifies a grove of trees that were transplanted to the statue’s current location. These trees will be removed and if feasible will be transplanted to the statue’s proposed location. Confirmation of the tree location will be dependant on the arborist’s assessment of their condition and projected potential for surviving the move.

The April 2021 BHSC motion requests a meaningful commemoration component be added to the property. An interpretive panel will be installed in the same area as the statue commemorating the Order and their work in education, health care and social services in Ottawa East. As heritage staff would like to collaborate with the Applicant on the content of the commemoration component an effort will be made to coordinate a working group.

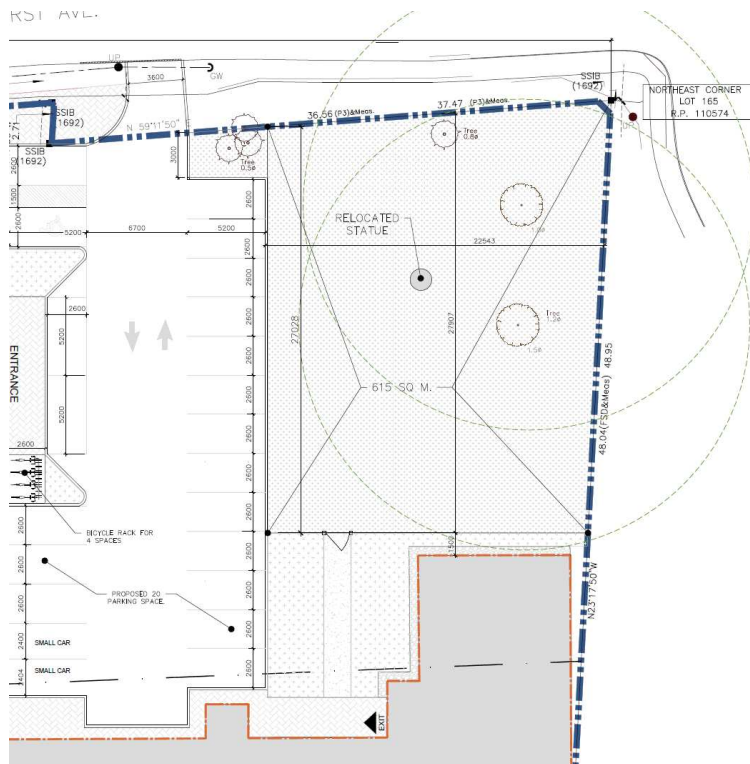


Figure 14: A partial view of the site plan on Springhurst Avenue illustrating the layout and positioning of the Statue within the dedicated landscape hatched in grey. The relocation of the statue along the Springhurst Avenue bend is a highly visible public park setting. Source Woodman Architects and Associates, August 18, 2022.

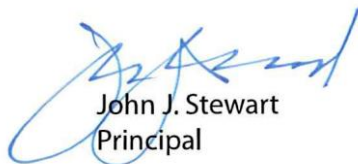
## 4.0 AUTHORS QUALIFICATIONS

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**Commonwealth Historic Resource Management** offers a professional service related to conservation, planning, research, design, and interpretation for historical and cultural resources. A key focus of the practice is assessing the impact of development on heritage resources. The firm was incorporated in 1984.

**John J. Stewart**, B.L.A., O.A.L.A., C.S.L.A., CAHP, a principal of Commonwealth is a specialist in the planning and design of cultural resources, building conservation, and commercial area revitalization. A graduate of the University of Guelph, he received additional training at Cornell University (USA) and Oxford University (UK) and holds a diploma in the Conservation of Monuments from Parks Canada, where he worked as Head, Restoration Services Landscape Section. Before Commonwealth's formation, Stewart served for four years as the first director of Heritage Canada's Main Street Program.

Stewart is a founding member of the Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals. He has served as the Canadian representative of the Historic Landscapes and Gardens Committee of ICOMOS and the International Federation of Landscape Architects. Stewart is a panel member with the Ottawa Urban Design Review Panel and a board member of Algonquin College Heritage Carpentry Program.



John J. Stewart  
Principal

## 5.0 PHOTO APPENDIX OF HERITAGE FEATURES

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The following As-Found photo appendix documents the condition of the building’s interior and exterior at the time it was sold. It was prepared by Robertson Martin Architectures as part of CHER review of 15-17 Oblats Avenue Robert Martin 18.02.2018



Figure 1: Building Exterior (via Google Street View).



Figure 2: View of main entrance



Figure 3: Main Entrance doors to the convent



Figure 4: South-East corner of the property from Oblats Ave



Figure 5: South-West corner of the property from Oblats Ave

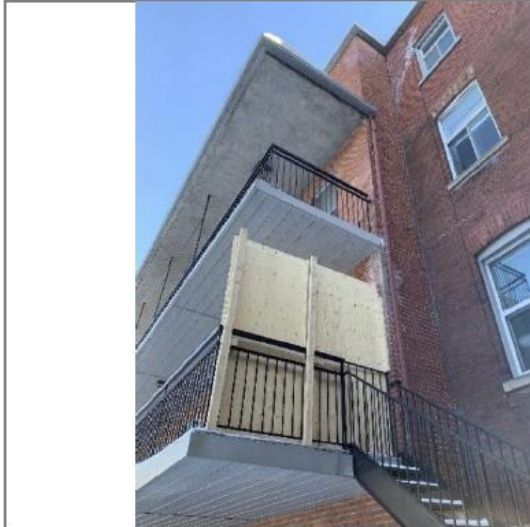


Figure 6: North-East corner of the property from Springhurst Ave



Figure 7: North-West corner of the property from Springhurst Ave





**Figure 8:** Exterior at north, west-facing balconies



**Figure 9:** Staircase / Fire Exit from exterior balconies



**Figure 10:** Exterior windows and simple cornice frieze



**Figure 11:** Meeting room



**Figure 12:** Small modified room with original gymnasium flooring visible



**Figure 13:** Circulation Staircase



Figure 14: Map of Order's territorial reach across the world

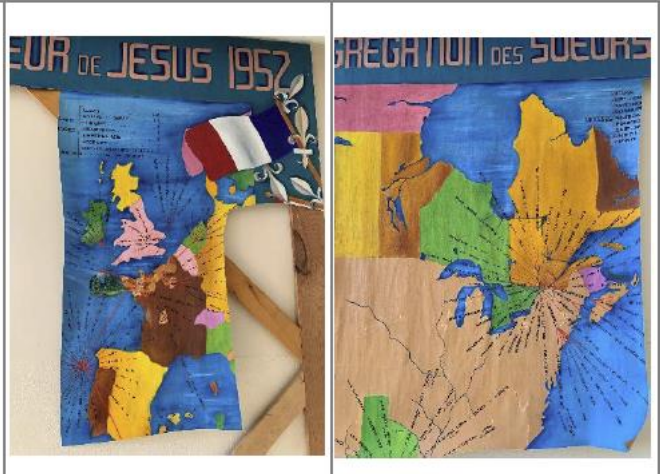


Figure 15-16: European and Canadian Maps displaying the presence of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus



Figure 16: Detail of removed baseboard



Figure 17: Small window with simple stained glass detailing at the edges



Figure 18: Large window with simple stained glass detailing



Figure 19: Removed circular stair at chapel





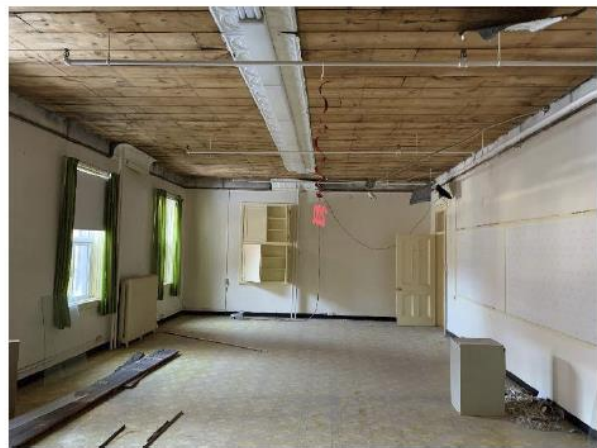
**Figure 20:** Chapel space



**Figure 21:** Chapel Nave and balcony



**Figure 22:** View from chapel balcony



**Figure 23:** North wing with stripped ceiling finishes



**Figure 24:** Stripped ceiling finishes



**Figure 25:** Exposed Ceiling revealing floor board, stripped ceiling finishes





**Figure 26:** Extensive trim removals



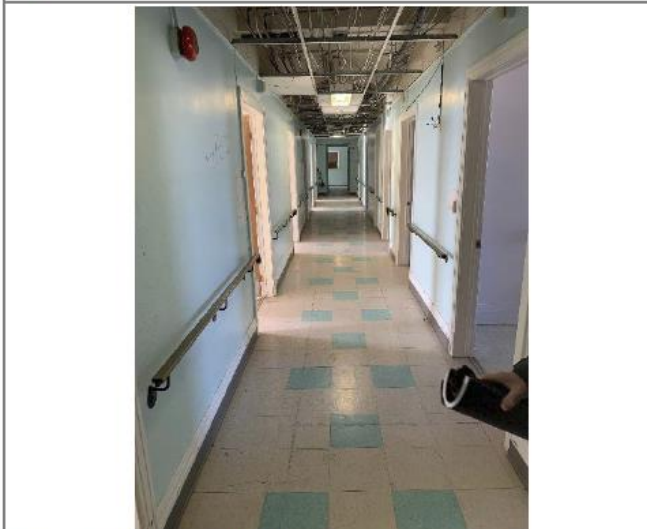
**Figure 27:** Extensive trim removals



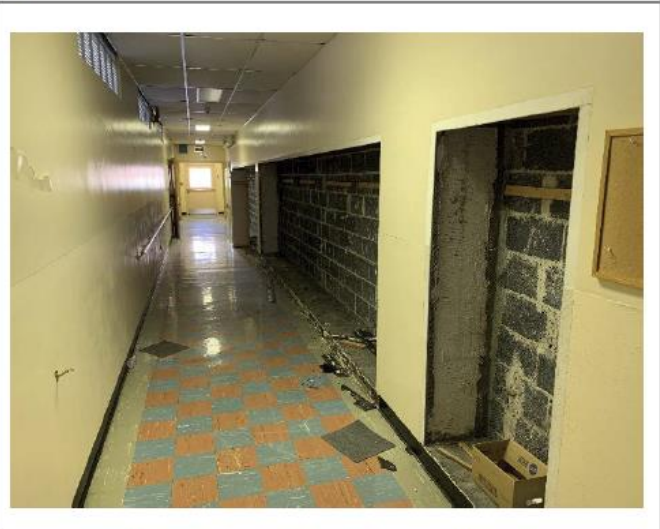
**Figure 28:** Room with ceiling system removed



**Figure 29:** Context of room with ceiling system removed



**Figure 30:** Hallway with ceiling system removed



**Figure 31:** Hallway old lockers removed. Note cinder block structure



**Figure 33:** Suite interior.



**Figure 34:** Typical interior



**Figure 35:** Bathroom Hallway – Women's



**Figure 36:** Care wing Hallway with parallel handrailing

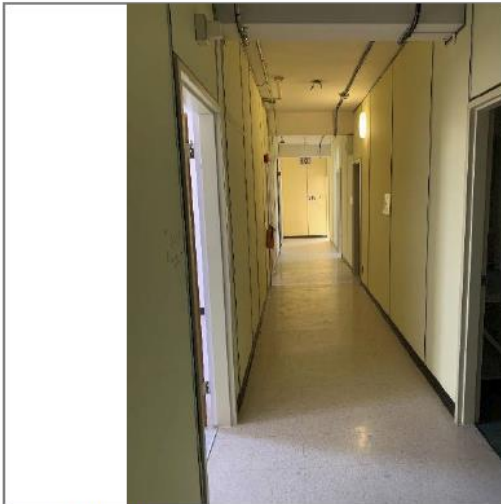


**Figure 37:** Small office space with checkerboard floor tile



**Figure 38:** Organ stripped out





**Figure 39:** Hallway



**Figure 40:** Ceiling cavity. Arch over chancel



**Figure 41:** Ceiling cavity. Arch over chancel



**Figure 42:** Previous kitchen / dining hall



**Figure 43:** Ramp at floor elevation change



**Figure 44:** Empty office with sash window

## 6.0 APPENDIX - HISTORY AND RATIONALE FOR INCLUSION ONTO THE HERITAGE REGISTER

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*"Rationale for Listing on the City of Ottawa's Heritage Register,"* No Author Identified **Submission to the City** February 2021.

### Origins of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Angelique le Sourd, born in Saint Jacut, France was the founder of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart Order.

The Order emerged in the aftermath of the French Revolution in 1789 and evolved to receive formal recognition by the Church and the state during the 1820s.

Sectarian laws and religious persecution in France from the 1880 to 1904 lead the congregation to emigrate in order to carry out its mission elsewhere.

At the request of the Oblate Fathers well established in Ottawa, members of the Order settled in Ottawa 1902, establishing their presence in North American.

Initially the order provided laundry and meal services to the Oblate Order but quickly evolved the scope of their activities to better align with their mission, defined as "the promotion of persons through education, health and various social and ecclesiastic activities".

From this modest beginning, the Sisters expanded their reach to include parishes and communities in Gatineau and the Outaouais, Eastern Ontario and Montreal.

Source: [soeurdusacrecoerdejesus.org](http://soeurdusacrecoerdejesus.org)



# A History of Ottawa East

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## The Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (Les Soeurs du Sacré-Coeur de Jésus)

The Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (Les Soeurs du Sacré-Coeur de Jésus) celebrated 100 years as an Ottawa East institution in 2002. Angeliqué Le Sourd started the Order in Brittany, France in 1816. There are no actual images of this woman and the painting shown here is a representation of her in Brittany.



In 1902, at the request of the Oblate Fathers, five Sisters were sent to the Scholasticate to provide domestic service and that continued until 1969. A small convent was built just adjacent to the Scholasticate as seen in the photograph below. This original convent was lost to fire in 1913 and was replaced by the present structure in 1915.



By 1910 the Sisters had established their own convent at the present-day site on Oblate Ave. to receive novitiates for their Order. In 1911 the Sisters opened a boarding school that initially taught



elementary levels and later secondary levels up to Grade 13. During the busiest years up to 200 students boarded at the school. The original name of the school was the "Pensionnat à Externat du Sacré-Coeur".

Outside students came mainly from the Ottawa East area.



The training of novitiates for the Order initially took 2 years and that was later extended to three years. Many of the Sisters received teacher training at the University of Ottawa and taught in many of the schools throughout Ontario. The Sacred Heart Sisters taught at De Mazenod School on Main St. from 1938 to 1969.

As the Sacred Heart Order grew, so did the building with wings added to the original structure as the photographs of the convent below demonstrate. Well into the 1940's the Sisters maintained a



Sisters of the Sacred Heart

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large vegetable garden on the northwest portion of the property near Main St. as well as a chicken coop that supplied food for convent. At one point they even had a milk cow that regularly escaped the fence to prowl Ottawa East. A major renovation and extension of the building took place in 1954 with the addition of the back wing and the chapel. In addition the Order has living quarters for many Sisters in the houses on Main St. between Oblate and Springhurst Avenues.



By 1961 the Order had grown to a point where it regrouped forming two "religious provinces": the Province of Notre-Dame-du-Cap (Ontario) headquartered on Oblate Avenue; and the Province of Notre-Dame-du-Sacré-Coeur in St. Hubert (Quebec). In that year there were 246 Sisters, 31 Novices, 25 students and 2 pensioners in the Ontario Province.

By 1995 the convent ceased to train new novitiates. Many Sisters continue work outside of the convent in teaching and nursing positions. Today 95 Sisters live at the convent with many of the aged cared for in second floor infirmary that is staffed with nurses 24 hours a day. In addition the Order continues to maintain many missions throughout the world that are supported in part by the many crafts that are produced by the Sisters.



As with the Oblate Fathers, the Sisters of the Sacred Heart have played a major role in the churches and schools of the Ottawa East and continue to do so even today.

QUATRE ÂGES

QUATRE COSTUMES

MÊME SERVICE



1902



1912



1954



1965

Different styles of habits worn over the years



Rear view of the convent in 1914



Front view of the convent with new wing in 1926



Sisters of the Sacred Heart

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Sacred Heart Chapel c.1926



Sacred Heart Chapel - no date



Convent Sisters sewing - probably in the 1930's



Saint Vierge statue in back garden c1950



Sacred Heart Convent c2000

And finally, a glimpse of the evolution of the Sacred Heart Convent as seen in some of the air photos that can be found in the [Air Photo Study found here](#). These images are cropped portions and are not hotlinked.

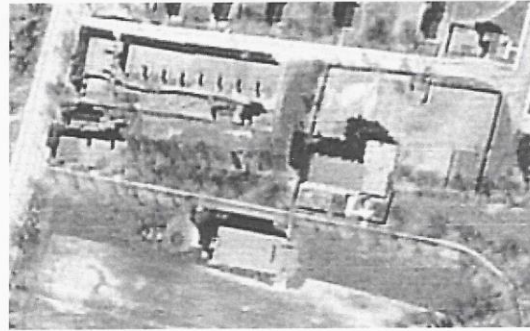
The first image (top left) from 1922 shows in sequence from left to right: Ste. Famille Church; Sacred Heart Convent (just behind and to the right) and the Scholasticate on the far right. That configuration should be the same with all the remaining photos unless somebody moved them!

Sisters of the Sacred Heart

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**1922** (H 5 1922 cropped)



**1928** (A26 36 1928 cropped)



**1931** (A3332 67 1931 cropped)



**1938** (A6532 36 1938 cropped)

Yes I know, it's almost impossible to see

 [Return to the Main Scholasticate Page](#)

## **RATIONALE FOR LISTING ON THE CITY OF OTTAWA HERITAGE REGISTER**

As noted in the early versions of the Old Ottawa East Secondary Plan, the Convent of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus at 15 Oblates Ave is part of a complex of structures and institutions that are part of the distinctive character of the Old Ottawa East neighbourhood. These include the St Paul University campus, the Deschatelet building, the Convent and the Immaculata High School cluster of buildings. Together, these structures can be seen as a built heritage cultural landscape around which and through (with the Greystone development project) the Old Ottawa has grown. To date however the focus has been on the designation of the Deschatelet building and the identification of individual buildings in Old Ottawa East seen to have historical value.

The Convent was previously included in an administrative list of places of heritage interest maintained by the City of Ottawa until it was replaced by the Municipal Register of Historic Places. Apparently, this reference was lost in the transition as the Municipal Register of Historic Places was established.

### **Architectural Value**

The Convent structure as it exists today is a sprawling but modestly designed institutional building that has evolved since its initial construction to accommodate the changing needs of the Order. In addition to accommodation and spiritual spaces for the Sisters and the training of novitiates, the building has been a boarding school and a longterm care facility for elderly members of the Order.

In the original OOE Community Design Plan, it is variously defined as part of “the Heritage, Institutional core” (p 13), a “minor axial view” (P 37) and along with the Deschatelet building as structures for redevelopment to “new uses, overtime, preserving the main features while allowing renovations that ensures their utility” (p 23).

### **Associative Value**

Both its history and its physical location represent a strong relationship with the more imposing Dechatelet building, bordering The Grand Allee and the former open space between the Deschatelet building and Main Street. The existence of the Convent recognizes the origins of Old Ottawa East but also allows current and future residents to understand the physical evolution of the community. And the convent structure does serve as one of the landmarks in Old Ottawa East.

The Convent is a distinct, physical marker of the Order in Ottawa. Their arrival in Old Ottawa East in 1902 established their presence in North America and they subsequently expanded in Texas, the lower Ottawa Valley, Montreal and eventually in northern communities.

It represents the significant contributor the Order has made to Franco Ontarian institutions through its educational mandate as a boarding school and through the engagement of the Sisters in schools and community services in Eastern Ontario and the Ottawa River valley.

These contributions strengthened francophone institutions and nurtured a vibrant francophone community that maintains the bilingual character of Ottawa today.

The Convent has also been a significant institution through which women have been able to exercise leadership and have an impact on their community. Thematically, it is part of the history of women in Ottawa and deserves recognition.