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# CULTURAL HERITAGE EVALUATION REPORT

## 110 O'CONNOR STREET, OTTAWA, ONTARIO



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**REVISED January 2024**

**PREPARED For:**

Édifice 110 O'Connor Inc.  
630, rue Saint-Paul O., bureau 600  
Montréal (Québec) H3C 1L9

**PREPARED By:**

John Stewart, Commonwealth Historic Resource Management and  
Barry Padolsky Associates Inc. Urban Design and Heritage Consultant

Cover Image:

**Building Name and Address:** Export Development Canada, 110 O'Connor Street

**Construction Date:** 1969 Architectural and Structural Drawings Sets

**Alterations:** None noted.

**Original Owner:** Federal Government Office Building, Export Development Canada.



## AUTHORS QUALIFICATIONS

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Commonwealth Historic Resource Management is a consulting firm that offers a range of professional services related to conservation, planning, and interpretation for historical and cultural resources. A key focus of the practice is planning and assessment of heritage resources as part of the development process.

**John J. Stewart, B.L.A., B.A.S. Honorary, OALA, CSLA, 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 Trades Program.

**Barry Padolsky, B. Arch., M. SC. (Urban Design), OAA, FRAIC, RCA, CAHP** is a member of the Ontario Association of Architects, (1965); the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, (1965); a Fellow, Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, (1987); the Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals, (2003) and the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts (2006). He has been recognized with 43 national and civic architectural and urban design awards, including 29 for heritage conservation. He was a member of the City of Ottawa Built Heritage sub-committee advising Ottawa City Council on heritage matters (2013-2023) and was honoured with the Order of Ottawa (2021). In 2023, he was appointed to serve on the NCC's Advisory Committee on Planning, Design and Realty.

**Ian Hunter, Built Heritage Specialist, Researcher** is a specialist in the research and assessment of cultural heritage resources and building conservation. Experience in the heritage conservation field extends over 30 years, primarily working for Commonwealth Historic Resource Management.



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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Scope

This Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report (CHER) evaluates the cultural heritage values of 110 O’Connor Street in the City of Ottawa, Ontario. The property was listed on the City’s Heritage Register in 2019 as a property of potential cultural heritage value or interest. It is one of ten buildings identified in 2017 as worthy of consideration and placed on the city’s heritage register as part of the Centretown Neighbourhood Character Area Study. This area bound by the Ottawa River to the north, Highway 417 to the south, Queen Elizabeth Drive and the Rideau Canal to the east, and Bronson Avenue to the west and includes five different heritage conservation districts, Bank Street, Cathedral Hill, Centretown, Minto Park, and Sparks Street Heritage Conservation Districts as well as Parliament Hill and Ottawa’s Central Business District west of the Rideau Canal.

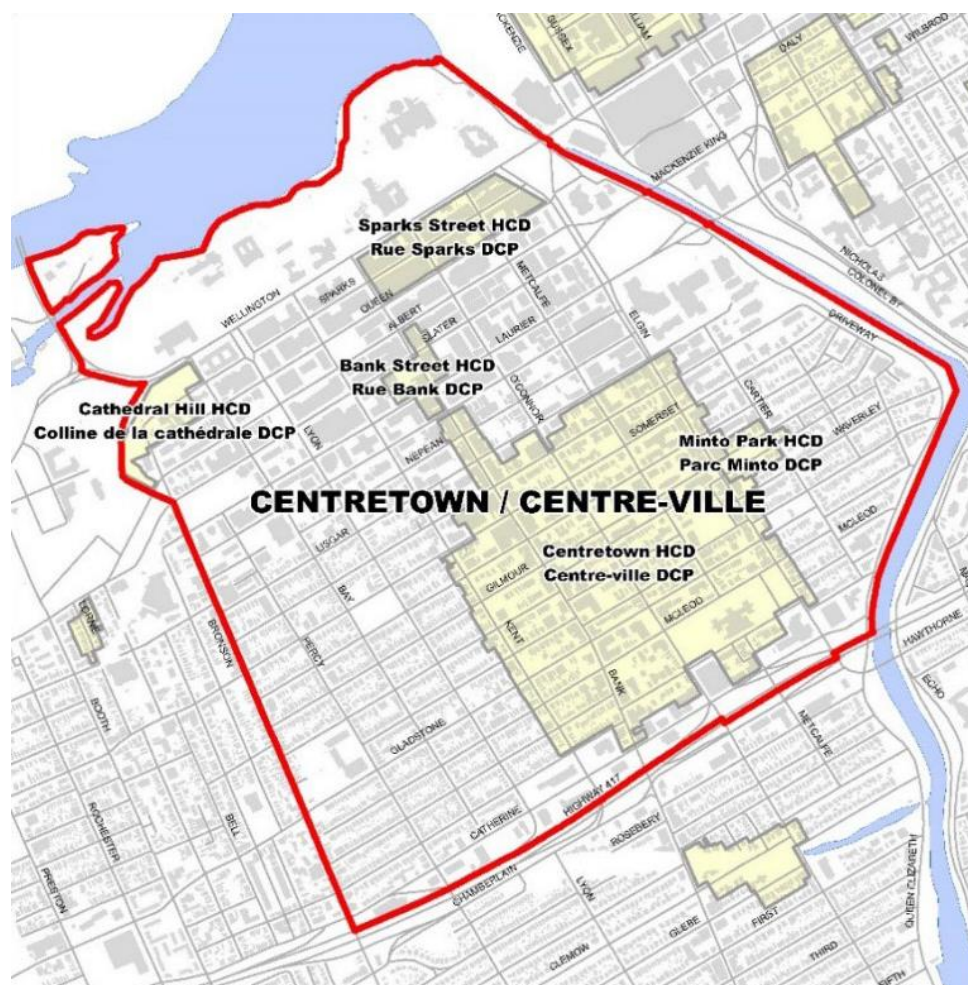


Figure 1: Centretown neighbourhood study Area. Source City of Ottawa 2022.

This assessment expands on the evaluation inventory and follows the criteria for the identification and evaluation of properties for their cultural heritage value or interest contained in the amended *Ontario Regulation 9/06: "Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest under the Ontario Heritage Act (O.Reg. 9/06) Amendment 569/22"*. The evaluation of the cultural heritage values focusing on the nine provincial criteria for determining cultural value or interest has provided the outline of the evaluation.

The following sources were reviewed in the preparation of this report:

Carleton University Library, Archives & Research Collections, George Bemi Fonds, Finding Aid;

- Central Area West HCD Study, Part 4. City of Ottawa, 1999:
- Centretown Heritage Conservation District Study (1997) and Plan 2022;
- Centretown, Neighbourhood Heritage Character, City of Ottawa. ND.
- Heritage Inventory, Property Information Sheet, 110 O'Connor Street, City of Ottawa;
- Memorandum to the Ottawa Built Heritage Subcommittee re the conserving Ottawa's Mid-century Modern Architecture addressed prepared by Barry Padolsky March 10, 2022.
- A letter to the City of Ottawa regarding proposed addition of buildings to the City of Ottawa Heritage Register 2019, Barry Padolsky Architect, March 10, 2022.
- Memo from Steve Willis, City of Ottawa to Ottawa Built Heritage Sub-committee re: City-wide Inventory of Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century Heritage Resources, March 24, 2022.
- 23-032 110 O'Connor building reuse Greiger et Eric Huot Architecte, 2023-12-15
- 23-12 -10 Technical Assessment Report 110 O'Connor L@C Experts Conseils en Structures
- Groupe Mach 110 O'Connor - Notice of Intent to Demolish Letter - Fotenn. 23 12 15

## Contact

Joseph Westres, Urbaniste (OUQ, MICU)  
Chargé de Projets - Développement Immobilier  
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## 1.2 Summary of Findings

The City of Ottawa's current effort to evaluate the heritage value of Ottawa's mid-century modern buildings (circa 1945-1980) is acutely compromised by the continued absence of a comprehensive survey and evaluation of the city's significant portfolio of buildings constructed in the post-war era. This oversight has resulted in an avoidable arbitrariness where, in 2019 for example, City heritage staff recommended adding 10 high rise mid-century modern buildings to the Heritage Register in Ottawa's Central Business District (including 110 O'Connor) and omitting 13 similar buildings constructed in the same era. No evidence of a comparative analysis was provided. The lack of a database and comparative analysis also seriously limits relying on any Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report (CHER) aimed at assessing and designating individual buildings such as 110 O'Connor under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.



The listed property 110 O'Connor Street was reviewed using the amended Ont. Reg 9/06. This Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report (CHER) considers each of the nine criteria and provides a comment explaining why the property may or may not meet the provincial criteria. Based on this assessment, the evaluation concludes that the property at 110 O'Connor meets three of the nine provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural value or interest. Consequently, the property would be marginally eligible to be considered for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act; however, we submit that 110 O'Connor **not be** proposed for designation.

### **1.3 Background**

#### **The 2019 Heritage Register listing**

The 14-storey office building at 110 O'Connor Street was constructed in 1969 to the design of George Bemi, Architect. The building is a reinforced concrete structure clad in architectural pre-cast concrete panels. The first two floors are set back from the street, creating a covered shopping concourse supported by a series of columns with thick angular columns extending to the facade with a distinct corner shrouded entrance. The inventory describes the building as angular and stark in expression, ribbed precast concrete, deeply incised horizontal slat windows. The design of the exterior of this building has features inspired by the brutalist style popular between 1950 and late 1970s.

George Bemi produced over 400 designs and built over 200 public and private sector buildings. His fonds are organized under two subheadings Office Buildings and Residential Buildings. Residential Buildings were designed with a distinct structural frame, the floor plate was compact with less depth than in commercial/office layouts, and cladding incorporating operable windows within concrete panels. Whereas office buildings such as 110 O'Connor were designed with larger floor plates, dictating a larger frame, structural grid, width between bays, placement of shear walls and vertical circulation (stairs, elevators), as well as fixed windows set in concrete panels and exterior panel treatment. Although not specifically a concern impacting the CHER evaluation, many of these factors result in building floor plates less flexible for adaptive reuse, which is a characteristic of modernist buildings. Another factor is materials fatigue, over time the concrete panels become brittle making conservation and modifications to the panels difficult. The structural engineering report prepared by Jean-René Larose, of L2C Structural Engineers outlines these issues.

According to the City of Ottawa documentation, 110 O'Connor was one of 10 buildings in Ottawa's central Business district constructed between 1957 and 1978 that could generally be characterized as examples of "mid-century modern" architecture and were recommended for addition to the Heritage Register

During the 2019 Register listing, there was discussion over and concerns raised as to which mid-century modern buildings in Ottawa's Central Area should be added to the City's Heritage Register. Ten office and apartment buildings were recommended for inclusion, while thirteen similar buildings were arbitrarily excluded. A second review of the study area was undertaken using the City's heritage

evaluation criteria of construction dates, and the FHBRO policy of evaluating buildings 40 years old or older. The review identified 13 other "mid-century modern" buildings, that have equivalent characteristics to the 10 buildings identified by City staff. These buildings, however, were excluded from being recommended for addition to the Heritage Register. It is further difficult to understand why 110 O'Connor is considered worthy of being on the register, while other mid-century buildings evaluated by ERA are listed as non-contributing.

## **1.4 The 2019 Two-Part Evaluation, Design, and Context**

### **Design**

The design test required that:

- The building or structure is a good expression of a particular architectural style, reflects the era of its construction.
- The building or structure represents the distinctive local design skills and available materials of its time.
- The style is reflected through architectural elements which might include, but are not limited to; the cornice, cladding, bargeboard, porch or balcony detailing, voussoirs, quoins, sills, lintels, window frames (mullions and muntins), doors, parapets, carvings, rooflines, integration with natural landscaping, etc. massing, shape, and volume of the original building (or additions of heritage significance) are clearly identifiable in the current form.
- Additions or modifications to the building are sympathetic regarding its original form.

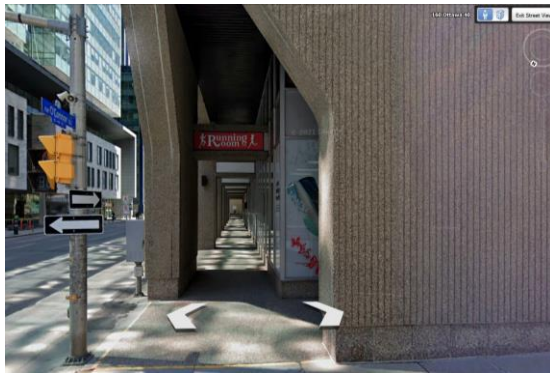
### **Context**

The property reflects the Neighbourhood Heritage Statement attributes:

- The building or structure reflects distinctive thematic and cultural references.
- The buildings or structure contributes to the heritage fabric of the street or neighbourhood.
- The building or structure connects with a natural landscape or a geographic feature, with a story, with the work of a well-known architect, or with the lives of Ottawans from the past.
- The building or structure, or an aspect therein, forms part of a cluster of cohesive and distinctive physical attributes, which collectively add to the aesthetic, social or cultural identity of the place. This may include elements such as a repeating pattern of a unique bargeboard motif limited to one neighbourhood block, a small grouping of houses sharing specific elements which reflect a particular architectural style or historic land use within the neighbourhood.

**Comment:** It should be noted that this list of criteria was provided by the city, but there was no indication why some buildings met these criteria while others were not considered significant. Nor whether the criteria were used to assess other modernist buildings throughout the study area.





Figures 2. (left) & 3 (right): Figures 2 (left) view from the corner along the covered arcade with the shroud demarking the corner entrance. Figure 3: A street view looking north, illustrating the two-storey commercial treatment.

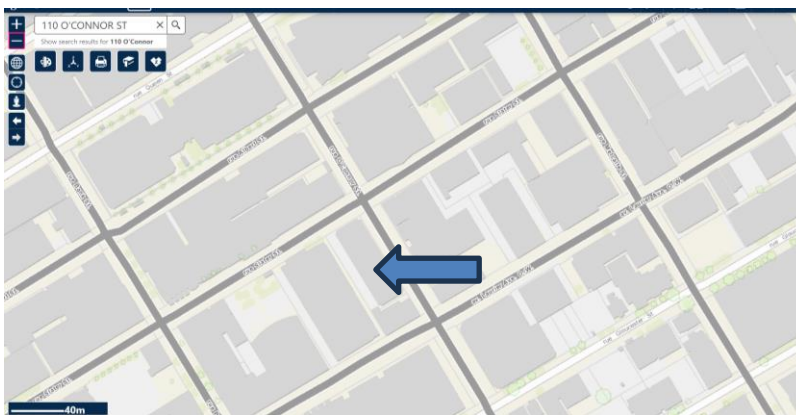


Figure 4: Plan of a section along O'Connor indicating the location of 110 O'Connor at the intersection of Slater Street.

### Current Heritage Context (Excerpts Centretown Neighbourhood Heritage Character Statement)

Today, the architectural character of Centretown is defined by its eclectic mix of building types, from modest family homes to modernist towers, to utility buildings and to landmarks of Parliament Hill. Centretown forms a distinct part of Ottawa's urban core and continues to reflect national politics and local histories.

### Heritage Attributes (Applicable to 110 O'Connor Street)

- Variety of architectural styles, expressions, and types indicative of an area with distinct periods of development over the 19th and 20th centuries.
- High-rise office buildings constructed between the end of the Second World War and the 1980s, predominantly in the north end of the neighbourhood, with many constructed in the 1970s and clad with precast concrete panels in the Brutality style. (NHS Centretown)

**Comment:** *Heritage attributes applicable to 110 O'Connor are fairly generic and beg the question of why they were not acceptable for the 13 other identified modernist buildings put forward in 2019? As part of this assignment character defining elements of mid-century architecture were developed and served to assess 110 O'Connor Street. (See page 8 - 9.)*

## 2.0 PROVINCIAL CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE/ INTEREST

### 2.1 Criteria, s. 27(3) (b) of Act O. Reg. 569/22,s.

The listed property 110 O'Connor Street was reviewed using the amended Ont. Reg 9/06, which states:

*1.(1) The criteria set out in subsection (2) are prescribed for the purposes of clause 27 (3) (b) of the Act. O. Reg. 569/22,s. 1.*

*(2) Property that has **not** been designated under Part IV of the Act may be included in the register referred to in subsection 27 (1) of the Act on and after January 1, 2023. If the property meets two of the following criteria for determining whether it is of cultural value or interest it can be considered for designation.*

Each of the nine criteria was considered and a comment was provided explaining why the property **does** or **does not** meet the provincial criteria. Based on the assessment, the evaluation concludes that the property at 110 O'Connor meets three of the nine provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural value or interest and eligibility to be considered for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

### 2.2 Style

**The property has design value or physical value because it is rare, unique, representative, or early example of a style, type, expression, material, or construction method?**

YES

#### Comment

110 O'Connor is a representative example of the Brutalist Style in Ottawa. Other better examples include the Ottawa Public Library, Central Branch (G. Bemi Architect, 1970); the National Arts Centre (F. Lebensold Architect, 1979) before its recent renovation; the Azrieli School of Architecture and Urbanism at Carleton University (Corneil Stinson Architects, 1972); Place du Portage Phases I, II, III, and IV (D. Lazoski Architect, 1979), and the Morissette Library at the University of Ottawa (Murray and Murray, 1972) as well as a grouping of FEBRO designated buildings at Tunney's Pasture.

Notable buildings designed by Bemi include St. Basil Roman Catholic Church (G. Bemi Architect 1960) and Nepean Police Headquarters (G. Bemi Architect, 1991) (recommended for designation, not designated, demolished). Other notable pieces that have been demolished include the Union du Canada Building (advocated for designation, not designated, demolished) and the Canadian Nurses Association Headquarters James Strutt (deemed of heritage value, recommended for demolition - with architectural fragments incorporated in a new building).

#### Background Research

**To provide an informed decision for the candidate property the following background research and analysis was undertaken**

The former Export Development Canada office building is a fourteen storey, reinforced concrete structure clad in architectural precast concrete sandwich panels completed in 1969. The slab form high-rise is rectangular in plan with the first two storeys setback from the property line with columns forming an arcade extending along O'Connor. Commercial uses are located on the first two floors and open concept office floor plans on the third through fourteenth storeys.

The property contains a modernist style office building influenced by the Brutalist Style and completed in 1969. The style is characterized through the use of raw concrete or masonry, a limited palette of materials, and the use of enduring construction elements such as stone or concrete. Other characteristics of the style include large geometric forms, often in unusual shapes; simple, clean lines; rough and raw surfaces; exposed concrete and other construction materials; monochromatic palettes; and modular elements such as architectural precast concrete panels.

The building is a reinforced concrete structure typical of most office buildings constructed in the Central Business District in the 1960s and 1970s. The massing and form reflects the height limits, and setbacks contained in the zoning bylaws current at the time. The bands of horizontal windows reflect its use and function with open concept floor plans. The building embodies modern office building design through its rectilinear composition and restrained façades.

The expression is monolithic and austere with the use of the broken rib finish on the concrete panels, and the use of precast concrete sandwich panels spanning between structural columns and from floor to floor. The north, south and west façades are similar in design featuring bands of recessed horizontal windows.

The use of architectural precast concrete cladding in North America spans between 1945 through to 1975, corresponding with the popularity of Modernist Style architecture, and the post-war economic boom. The concrete cladding was designed to fulfill an architectural function: through a particular concrete mix design and an expressive surface finish and/or treatment, it was able to contribute to the architectural expression of the building. The panels could be cast into interesting and artistic shapes to further add to this expression. Essential to the use of architectural precast panels was the change in building assemblies from load-bearing walls to curtain walls separating a building's skin from its structure. <sup>1</sup>

The popularity of architectural precast panels increased in the 1950s and 1960s due to better handling/erecting equipment, improved methods of production, and the continued development of new techniques and materials that continue through to this day. Improvements in casting technology and handling equipment also made larger panels possible, which sped up construction and required fewer joints and connections. <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Meloy, Grace. Architectural Precast Concrete Wall Panels: Their Technological Evolution, Significance, and Preservation. University of Pennsylvania Commons. 2016

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

The development of the window-type mullion wall panel in 1960 introduced glazing into architectural precast wall panels, making the concrete technology more competitive with metal and glass curtain walls by eliminating the need for an entirely separate structural frame while retaining a thin wall section. Similarly, the development of sandwich panels, which are precast panels consisting of two outer faces of concrete that sandwich a core of insulating material, provided a type of precast panel that addressed growing concerns for heating and air-conditioning costs.<sup>3</sup>

Although the increased speed of construction and high quality of the product made architectural precast wall panels competitive with metal and glass curtain walls, it was the diversity in shapes, colors, and textures that made this concrete technology the preferred material for curtain walls.<sup>4</sup>

### 2.3 Craftsmanship or Artistic Merit

**The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit?**

NO

#### Comment

The building is an example of a Modern style office building influenced by the Brutalist Style and demonstrates a moderate degree of craftsmanship in its use of industrially produced and highly engineered precast concrete cladding panels where the craftsmanship resided within the industry. Better examples of the G. Bemi Architect Brutalist Style in Ottawa include the Ottawa Public Library, Central Branch.

Surface finishes and treatments published during the 1960s by the Precast Concrete Institute (PCI) in particular emphasized the importance of effective communication between casters, architects, and engineers, especially for obtaining the desired surface appearance. The types of surface finishes and treatments did not change immensely after the 1965 Symposium sponsored by the American Concrete Institute (ACI); however, publications presented the range of finishes, applied either to plastic concrete during casting or hardened concrete after curing and stripping.

- Plastic Concrete: Chemical surface retarders; Brooming; Floating or troweling; Special form finishes; and, Scrubbing, and brushing to add surface texture.
- Hardened Concrete: Hand brushing and/or power rotary brushes; Belt sanding; Acid etching; Sand or other abrasive blasting; Honing and polishing; Bush hammering or other mechanical tooling; and the artificially created broken rib texture.<sup>5</sup>

Surface finishes evident on the building include artificially created broken rib texture.

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<sup>3</sup> ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

## 2.4 Technical or Scientific Achievement

**The property has design value or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.**

NO

### Comment

The technical merit is in the construction type – cast concrete frame/structure supporting. Any technical or scientific merit in the structural attachment and details that limited water migrating into the structure was for the most part due to the American Concrete Institute (ACI) and the panel manufacturers.

A symposium on architectural precast concrete panels sponsored by the ACI Committee 533 in 1965 and the publications that resulted from it provided an immense amount of information about the design, production, and assembly of this concrete technology that would ultimately spike the interest of the concrete industry. Technical details discussed included joint design suggesting that cement mortars be substituted with a mastic (assumed bitumen based) or thermosetting plastics or sealants. The symposium also provided best practice in the connections used to secure the panels to the concrete structure, as well as the two stage joint system to limit moisture migration through the panels and improve the air tightness of the building envelope. <sup>6</sup>

The Canadian Standard Association in association with the National Research Council were developing a standard for architectural precast concrete panels in the 1960s. By 1966, the Building Research Council had developed a number of building digest notes related to the use of architectural precast wall panels. Technical notes focused on an assortment of issues including thermal and moisture deformations in building materials; thermal bridges in buildings; wind pressures on buildings; rain penetration and its control; requirements for exterior walls; principles applied to an insulated masonry wall; temperature gradients through building envelopes; and vapour diffusion and condensation. <sup>7</sup>

The Canadian Precast/Pre-stressed Concrete Institute (CPCI) is a well-established technical and marketing institute, founded in 1961, that is recognized throughout Canada as the body of knowledge for precast and prestressed concrete products and systems. CPCI's purposes include stimulating and advancing the common interests and general welfare of the structural, architectural and specialty precast pre-stressed concrete industry in Canada.

## 2.5 Direct Associations

**The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization, or institution that is significant to a community?**

YES

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> • NRC Publications Archive. Selected annotated bibliography on precast concrete wall panels Dryburgh, R. B. Bibliography (National Research Council of Canada. Division Of Building Research); no. BIBL-31, 1966-02, Ottawa 1966.

### Comment

The post-war expansion and economic boom impacted Ottawa primarily during the 1960s and 1970s. Expanded government roles, in this case in the promotion, funding, and development of export markets for Canadian made products.

### Organization/Activity

Export Development Canada

### Person - Architect

**George Bemi 1927-2023** was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1927. After returning from serving in the Royal Canadian Navy during World War II, George Bemi attended the University of Manitoba Architecture School. Upon graduation in 1951, George Bemi was employed by Defence Construction Ltd., and was transferred to Ottawa the following year.

In 1955, Bemi became the Associate Partner of the Montreal architecture firm, Greenspoon, Freeland & Dunn. It was in 1957 that George Bemi went on to establish his own architecture firm in the national capital region, G.E. Bemi & Associates. Bemi was the sole practitioner of the firm except for 1961 when he partnered with Tim Murray for one year. In 1989 Bemi's son James became a partner. With over fifty years of experience, George Bemi produced over 400 designs and built over 200 public and private sector buildings. Two of the most notable buildings include the main branch of the **Ottawa Public Library** that won the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC) Festival of Architecture Award of Merit in 1979. Other notable works include, **the Downtown 'Y'**, the **Nepean Police Headquarters**, and **St. Basil Roman Catholic Church**. Over the course of his career, George Bemi had been an active member of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC), the Ottawa Regional Society of Architects (ORSA) and the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA). (Source G. Bemi Fonds, Finding Aid, and Ontario Association of Architects Memoriam)

### Person – Structural Engineer

Adjeleian & Associates Engineers

Adjeleian Allen Rubeli Limited is a Structural Engineering consulting firm with offices in Ottawa and Toronto. The firm was founded in 1955 by John Adjeleian (1923 – 2004). Since its inception it has provided a comprehensive range of services in all areas of structural planning, design, and investigations. One cannot travel anywhere in Ottawa without seeing the impact of the firm's contribution to the skyline – there are also many significant buildings to be found scattered throughout the Toronto area.

John Adjeleian was an accomplished consulting engineer; he was also a well-respected academic, with a long history at Carleton University culminating in his terms as Chair of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. In 2003, the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering established an annual lecture series named after John Adjeleian. A stroll through the campus will reveal a dozen or more well-known buildings designed by Adjeleian Allen Rubeli Limited.



## 2.6 Contributes to Community Understanding

The property has historical value or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture?

NO

### Comment

The building was a market response following World War II for additional office facilities to service the requirements of the growing federal government.

## 2.7 Demonstrates or Reflects Ideas

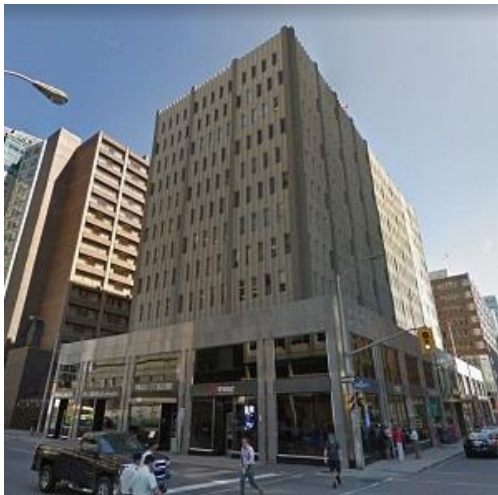
The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, building, designer, or theorist who is significant to a community?

YES

### Comment

The G. Bemi Fonds list the projects by type Office Buildings or Residential Subheadings, in this case Office Buildings. There are over 80 (some duplicate) files in the Office Building subdirectory. The examples presented for comparative analysis are limited to examples completed in the 1960s. It is interesting to note that a number of modernist designed buildings located in Centretown HCD are classified as non-contributing.

Examples of his work include the three properties described below.



Burnside Building 151 Slater Street. File - Plans, Photographs and Slides: Burnside Office Building - Massey Awards Submission, 1965. The building was recently rehabilitated and set on a glazed podium. The architectural precast concrete mullion panels extending from floor to floor and developed in 1960 are evident in the facades of the upper floors. Note the use of multiple mullion panels between structural columns. Source: Google Earth





Narono Office Building, 369 Laurier Avenue West. File - Narono Office building -working drawings 67-50, 94-245, 87-212 1967-1995. Note the similarity in the ground floor treatment with a colonnade and recessed ground floor to improve pedestrian circulation, and the architectural precast concrete mullion panels. Note the width of the panels indicating that the original joints were most likely filled with mortar. The thermal expansion of panels was a limiting factor in the panel size and durability of the mortar joints; hence the panel widths are relatively narrow width.



E.A. Bourque Memorial (Constitution) Building - Rideau & King Edward 63-11, 1963-1965.  
Source Google Earth

## 2.8 Area Character

**The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining, or supporting the character of the area?**

No

### Comment

Centretown is a large diverse area. The architectural character is defined by its eclectic mix of building types, from modest family homes to modernist towers. Heritage attributes of the area include a variety of architectural styles, expressions, and types indicative of an area with distinct periods of development over the 19th and 20th centuries. Office buildings constructed between the end of the Second World War and the 1980s, are predominantly located in the north end of the neighbourhood. Many were constructed in the late 60s and 70s, clad with precast concrete panels in the Brutalist style and are a distinguishing feature in the central core where offices are concentrated, but when assessed against the Centretown Study area it does not define or maintain the area's character.

## 2.9 Visually or Historically Linked

**The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually, or historically linked to its surroundings?**

NO

### Comment

The office building is physically and functionally linked to its surroundings, being located in the Central Business District where a large number of high-rise office towers were constructed to house federal

government departments and agencies and corporate headquarters. Following the 2019 review a second list was prepared based on the city criteria as well as FHRBO. These properties with similar characteristics, some by the same architect, have not been considered.

## 2.10 Landmark

The property has contextual value because it is a landmark?

NO

### Comment

The property has a corner location and is situated in an area where mid to high-rise office towers completed in the 1960s are dominant. It does not exhibit landmark status.

## 3.0 CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

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This revised assessment follows the criteria for the identification and evaluation of properties for their cultural heritage value or interest contained in the amended *Ontario Regulation 9/06: "Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest under the Ontario Heritage Act (O.Reg. 9/06) Amendment 569/22"*. Based on that assessment, the property scored positively for three of the nine provincial criteria and is therefore eligible for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

### Recommendations

As the evaluation indicates 110 O'Connor meets three of the nine criteria making it marginally eligible for designation. A challenge for determining the heritage value and providing a research-informed basis for weighing the criteria is the absence of a systematic survey and evaluation of Ottawa's mid-century modern architecture. George Bemis produced over 400 designs and built over 200 public and private sector buildings. Examples featured in the report (see also page 7) are considered better examples of Bemis's work. One of the most notable buildings is the main branch of the Ottawa Public Library that won the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC) Festival of Architecture Award of Merit in 1979. Other notable works include, the Downtown 'Y', the Nepean Police Headquarters, and St. Basil Roman Catholic Church.

It is recommended that:

1. Based on the low score, 110 O'Connor Street should not be designated;
2. The city might consider establishing a subdistrict within the Centretown area with a more focused list of attributes addressing tall buildings to help guide future evaluations; and
3. The City of Ottawa proceed with a City wide inventory of mid-20th Century Heritage Resources project included in heritage staff's work plan in 2022 but deferred due to other priorities.

## **4.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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The following sources were consulted:

- Centretown Heritage Inventory Project Draft ERA Architects, 2020;
- Carleton University Library, Archives & Research Collections, George Bemi Fonds, Finding Aid;
- Carleton University Library, Archives & Research Collections, George Bemi Fonds, Architectural and Structural Drawings Provided by Client;
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