

The Government of Canada Building in Belleville was constructed in 1956. It was designed by Watson and Weigand Architects of Belleville. Alterations to the building have been made since 1966, the most recent being in 1995. Public Works and Government Services Canada is the custodian of the building and it currently serves as a postal and employment insurance office. See FHBRO Building Report 99-70.

### Reasons for Designation

The Government of Canada Building in Belleville has been designated "Recognized" because of its architectural value, historical associations, and environmental significance.

The Government of Canada Building in Belleville is representative of the post-World War II period of growth and new development, in particular the expansion of federal government departments and services. Considered to be a large scale project at the time of its construction, the design encompassed a full city block requiring the demolition of several existing buildings and the closing of an existing street, thereby, contributing to a significant phase in the development of the local community.

Designed by Watson and Weigand Architects, this building was one of their most important commissions and is a very good example of their work. The firm was also involved in the design of several municipal building projects for the city and their design influence is quite apparent in Belleville. The Government of Canada Building in Belleville is a good example of post-war modern design and the International Style.

Located at the foot of the Front Street bridge, the building marks the 'gateway to downtown' Belleville and its main commercial artery Pinnacle Street, and reinforces the present character of the streetscape. The public nature of its post office and employment insurance office functions, as well as its central location, give the building a certain prominence throughout the city and the surrounding region.

### Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Government of Canada Building in Belleville resides in its value as a representative example of post-war modern design sensibilities and the International Style, and the significance of its prominent setting and public function in the community. These qualities are expressed by the following character defining elements:

- The relationship between the top floor's solid mass with punched openings and the transparency of the ground floor base, which creates the impression of a

floating volume and visually differentiates the building's functions.

- The influence of the International Style reflected in the asymmetrical stepped massing; simple geometric shapes; lack of ornamentation; use of simple construction materials and smooth surfaces; and the strong horizontal emphasis of the building including the flat roof, continuous bands of punched fenestration, and the band of black granite which wraps around the base of three elevations.
- The functional design of the building including the location of public and processing facilities on the ground floor, offices on the second floor, and the loading dock at the rear; the proven adaptability of the floor plates which remain essentially unchanged; and provisions for the upward expansion of the building.
- The use of quality craftsmanship and materials to construct the exterior elevations including limestone masonry on all four elevations; glass curtain walls; brickwork; and, a feature wall at the entrance, as well as the successful use of several new materials including ceramic enamelled steel posts between the aluminum window units which are an early example of a thermal break in window frame design.
- The use of quality craftsmanship and finishes on the interior of the building, including the painted concrete block walls and acoustic tile ceilings in the offices, and the terrazzo floors and hard plaster walls in the circulation spaces.
- The integrity of the historical relationship between the building and its associated landscape despite minor changes such as the addition of two access ramps and an extension to the loading dock.
- Its prominent location on the street serving as the 'gateway to downtown' Belleville, and its main commercial artery.
- The manner in which the building reinforces the existing streetscape by respecting the building faces and the cornice lines of the adjacent buildings.

For further guidance, please refer to the *FHBRO Code of Practice*.