

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The former Montreal Postal Terminal is a massive seven-storey building constructed of reinforced concrete and steel sheathed in red brick and granite. It was built in two stages: the original section between 1934 and 1937, and an addition, which doubled the size of the building, in 1953. It was the first of a new type of postal facility in Canada which, while not replacing the traditional urban post office which served the immediate community, was a distinctive building type rooted in industrial design and found primarily in large urban transportation centres. The Montreal Postal Terminal represents the first time that principles of modern industrial design and planning were applied to the problem of mail handling in Canada. The facade was divided horizontally into a one and two storey granite base which supported the subsequent floors sheathed in brick. The three street elevations have a strong vertical emphasis defined by narrow brick piers which extend the full height of the building. The horizontal floor divisions were de-emphasized by the use of metal spandrels between each of the wide windows. This device visually unites the space between the piers into a series of elongated panels which were capped by a slightly pointed arch. This pattern imparts a slightly gothic cast to the design which was reinforced by the gothic detailing around the main entrance. The corners of the building are accented by slightly projecting pavilions punctuated by a distinctive tripartite window grouping. Its setting, in downtown Montreal, is compatible with the dominant character of the area. Because this building has a certain gothic decoration it harmonizes well, even as an industrial building, with the architectural fabric of the neighbourhood. The 1953 addition was faithful to the architectural integrity of the original exterior materials and design features.

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