

Ottawa, Ontario
Postal Station B
47-59 Sparks Street

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

Postal Station B, Ottawa, was built in 1938-39 to designs by W.E. Noffke, architect, of Ottawa. In 1984, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board identified this along with the other buildings around Confederation Square as of national historical and architectural importance. The building belongs to Public Works Canada. See FHBRO Building Report 85-14.

Reason for Designation

In June, 1986, Postal Station B was designated Classified because it is a significant and creative work of architecture and because it makes an important contribution to the character of Confederation Square and the Sparks Street Mall.

In Postal Station B, W.E. Noffke, a distinguished Ottawa architect of the period, found an elegant solution to a demanding symbolic program. The government of the day recognized this building as its major contribution to the enclosure of the newly-created Confederation Square. Its cornice heights and, to a degree, its bay rhythms were established by the adjoining Office of the Prime Minister and Privy Council; the roof was imposed by a political preference for the Chateau Style, or at least for large copper roofs. Noffke integrated these givens in a composition of Classical regularity with the honed-down surface treatment typical of the Art Deco sensibility. The building is an entirely convincing example of good architectural manners.

Postal Station B was intended to be the springing of a consistent façade to Elgin Street south to Laurier Avenue. The Lord Elgin Hotel is a direct response to this aim; the Lorne Building and the British High Commission are less direct responses to the same intention. Postal Station B also works well as the gateway to the Sparks Street Mall.

Character Defining Elements

The whole of the visible façades and roofs of the building, including windows and doors, architectural metals and fittings, and, of course, the lions which guard its doors, are essential to its heritage character. It is unlikely that any of these elements can be altered without seriously diminishing the whole.

The public interiors of the building were originally finished with a suitable richness of material and ornament. The qualities of this space have been eroded over the years by successive small changes. It would be appropriate for this process now to reverse itself.

Postal Station B (continued)
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The architectural and social values of this building would be best preserved if it were to remain a post office.

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