

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

SUMMARY

The Hope Building was built in 1910 by Holbrooke and Sutherland, contractors, and by the dominion Bridge Co. for the steelwork, to the designs of W.E. Noffke, an Ottawa architect. It was Recognized because it is a very good example of the development of the community and for its very good architectural design.

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

This building is one of 19 buildings located on the north side of Sparks Street between Elgin and Bank Streets, an area which has been, since the 1880s at least, the core of Ottawa's central business district. It was erected by the Ottawa bookseller and stationer James Hope primarily as rental accommodation for lawyers, real estate agents and other professionals. Hope was a longtime sparks Street landowner: having disposed of two earlier buildings, he purchased a narrow part lot further west along sparks Street and commissioned the Ottawa architect W.E. Noffke to design a combined bookstore for his own use, and an office building primarily dedicated to Hope's great love, religious publishing. Naming the structure "Bible House", he ordered the addition of a statue of Hope, a Grecian allegorical female figure which, play on his name notwithstanding, represented the owner's expectation that his enterprise would contribute to a better world.

ARCHITECTURE

This is a nine-storey steel-frame and concrete slab building only 33 feet wide by 99 feet deep. The extreme narrowness of the lot coupled with the building's steel-frame construction encouraged a simple treatment of the facade above the ground floor. The Sparks Street elevation consists of an entryway of mahogany with bronze fittings serving the floors above and a storefront in bronze, plate glass and granite with a bronze granite with bronze spandrels. The terminating storey consists of an elaborate cap of English glazed terra cotta panels produced by the Doulton potteries of Leeds, England with a bronze cornice topped by a terra cotta statue representing "Hope". All other walls were of brick.

ENVIRONMENT

Prominently located next to the postal substation, the Hope Building is the first of the privately owned highrise buildings along the north side of Sparks Street. Its great height compared with its width, its midblock location and the narrowness of Sparks Street make it a difficult building to see in perspective, but its continuing use as a major bookstore contributes to its familiarity locally. For the city, it is a building of heritage interest, and was given an award of excellence for PWC's efforts at rehabilitation in 1984.

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