

## HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

### SUMMARY

The Slater Building was built in 1894. Both the builder and the architect are unknown. It was Recognized because of its very good design and craftsmanship as well as its setting which reinforces the character of the area. It forms a unit with its neighbours, the Brouse (181-1 83 Sparks) and the Dover (185-1 87 Sparks) buildings.

### 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. The Slater Building was constructed as a speculative investment by Robert and Esther Slater, long-prominent members of the Ottawa élite since the latter was the daughter of Nicholas Sparks. During the 1890s, commercial properties began to appear on Sparks Street. The first to build was Henry Brouse at 181-83 Sparks; he completed his rental property in 1893. The next year, the Slaters followed with a three-storey stone-fronted building which was initially rented out as 14 small offices. An Ottawa hardware dealer, A.J. Stephens, completed the row two years later with his new hardware store at 185-187 Sparks. The Slater Building reflects the commercial development of Sparks Street westward to Bank in the late nineteenth century, as well as the persistence of the three-storey commercial block during this period. It is also connected with a notable Ottawa family, the Slaters.

### ARCHITECTURE

Though the ground floor has been changed and the interiors entirely renovated, the exterior retains the basic appearance of the original design which in typical late-Victorian fashion, combined elements of a number of styles into a panache which bespoke of eclecticism and individuality rather than of any single architectural tradition. Originally, the ground storey included two cast-iron shopfronts clasped by rusticated stone pillars at either end. The first floor contains an array of elements: a traditional romanesque grouping of three windows separated by paired columns, with the side openings surmounted by carved stone panels and the middle window divided by an unusual stylized carved sandstone column. The second storey consists of an extremely lively and plastic arrangement of brickwork, including four arched windows with brick keys, curved voussoirs and stone imposts and a complex arrangement of brick corbelling rising to a strongly projecting cornice. The assemblage is a quite free interpretation of the romanesque style handled with the eclecticism which characterized late nineteenth century design.

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## ENVIRONMENT

This is a relatively low structure on a block on which much taller and more recent buildings predominate. The quality of its design and of PWC's rehabilitation gives the building an attractive appearance which the city of Ottawa recognized by awarding the building a certificate of merit in 1983.

June 13, 1986