



MacDONALD HOTEL 10065 - 100 STREET

Description of Historic Place

The Macdonald Hotel, built in the derivative Canadian chateau style of the grand railway hotels, is one of Edmonton's foremost symbolic and visual landmarks. Fronting on 100 Street and McDougall Hill adjacent to Frank Oliver Memorial Park in Edmonton's downtown core, it's strategically situated, L-shape form and seven-storey Indiana limestone façades present a dignified and solid presence overlooking Edmonton's North Saskatchewan River valley.

Heritage Value

Built in 1915 and named after Sir John A. MacDonald, the "Mac", as it has become affectionately known, is significant for its strong association with Edmontonians social, cultural and political history as exemplified by the intense civic rancour when it closed its doors in 1983 and the protracted negotiations that led to its careful restoration and extraordinarily well received public reopening celebration in May of 1991. The centrepiece for royal visits, graduations, family birthdays, and a wide range of occasions in between, the "Mac" continues to be a major contributor to Edmonton's collective memory.

The Macdonald is architecturally significant as an expression of the Canadian chateaux style, the preferred style for the transcontinental railway hotels, which is derived from the French Renaissance Chateaux. Characterized by high-pitched dormered roofs and inspired by French Renaissance architectural elements, the Macdonald Hotel was designed for the Grand Trunk Railway by architects Ross and MacFarlane, who also designed the Fort Garry Hotel and the Chateau Laurier.



Rooted in Canadian history through its origins as one of two Chateau style railway hotels built by the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway and later owned by both the Canadian National Railway and the Canadian Pacific Hotels, the Macdonald Hotel symbolizes Edmonton's participation in the historic national transcontinental railway initiative.

The Macdonald Hotel's substantial visual landmark status can be attributed to its distinctive architecture and prominent location overlooking the North Saskatchewan River escarpment.

Character Defining Elements

The Canadian Chateaux style is expressed in the character defining elements such as:

- the form, massing and scale of the L-shaped building, the recessed diagonal entranceway and perpendicular wings and turret;
- the steeply sloped dormered roofs including roof features such as high chimneys, projecting towers, turret roof and finials;
- the five arches of the entrance portico with order expression of four pillars and two pilasters including stone detailing such as gargoyles and provincial crests of the four western provinces;

- the major defining elements on all façades such as pilasters, balustrades, balconettes, overhangs, brackets, cornices, arches and keystones and other stone detailing;
- moldings and decorative elements on all façades including hood moldings, dentils, and panels;
- all blind arcades, windows and door openings, arched windows, leaded glass transoms, windowsills and transoms;
- all architectural metals such as copper roofing, cornices, bracketing and decorative eavestrough.

The cultural landscape and landmark character defining elements of the Macdonald hotel such as:

- the Frank Oliver Memorial Park between the Macdonald and Jasper Avenue;
- the relationship of the building to McDougall Hill, Jasper Avenue and 100th Street;
- the open space adjacent to the rear façades of the building overlooking the North Saskatchewan River Valley;
- the views of the North Saskatchewan River Valley from the hotel and adjacent grounds;
- the open space and gardens at the east side of the building.

