



ST. JOSAPHAT CATHEDRAL

10825 - 97 Street NW

CITY OF EDMONTON HISTORIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Edmonton

DESCRIPTION OF HISTORICAL PLACE

St. Josaphat Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral is a large Byzantine-style church located on four city lots in Edmonton's McCauley neighbourhood. Built between 1939 and the mid-1940s, the cathedral is distinguished by its seven domes, columned entry portico, and red brick veneer embellished with darker brick pilasters and inlaid cream coloured crosses.

HERITAGE VALUE

The heritage value of St. Josaphat Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral consists in its association with the establishment and development of Ukrainian Catholic religious life in Alberta and in its excellent representation of Ukrainian-Canadian church architecture.

Prior to the turn of the twentieth century, Ukrainian Catholics on the prairies frequently found themselves deprived of clergy familiar with their language, culture, or liturgy. In 1902, the Ukrainian Basilian Fathers arrived in Edmonton to minister to the Ukrainian Catholic population. They represented some of the earliest Ukrainian Catholic missionaries in western Canada. Under the leadership of Reverend Sozont Dydyk, the Basilians built the original St. Josaphat Church in 1904. The faith community continued to expand in the succeeding decades; by the late 1930s, the church was deemed too small for the growing parish. In 1938, plans were drawn up for an ambitious new building to both comfortably accommodate the church's parishioners and commemorate the 950 year anniversary of the Christianization of the Ukraine. Construction on the church began the following year and was completed in the

mid-1940s on its present site. The church was solemnly dedicated in 1947. One year later, a Papal Bull divided the Ukrainian Catholic Exarchate of Winnipeg - encompassing all of Canada - into three exarchates (administrative districts) located in Edmonton, Winnipeg, and Toronto. As the sole Ukrainian Catholic church in Edmonton, St. Josaphat was designated a cathedral, with Most Reverend Neil N. Savaryn appointed Bishop Ordinary for the Apostolic Exarchate of Edmonton serving Alberta and British Columbia.

St. Josaphat Ukrainian Catholic Church is one of the finest examples of Ukrainian-Canadian church architecture in Edmonton and Alberta. The building's architect, Philip Ruh, was an Oblate priest tasked with working as a missionary among Canada's Ukrainian Catholics. He sensitized himself to the aesthetic and spiritual sensibilities of Ukrainian Catholics and was responsible for designing over thirty churches for this faith community throughout western Canada and Ontario. St. Josaphat is the most grandiose example of Ruh's work in Alberta, expressing the architect's rich sense of historical continuity with the Byzantine tradition and his appreciation for Ukrainian Baroque ideals. Based on the nine-part cruciform plan - the largest of the Ukrainian Baroque designs - the church embodies Baroque exuberance in its polychromatic exterior, featuring dark brick pilasters and yellow brick crosses, and in the dramatic structure of its cupolas. The church's interior was adorned in the 1950s with the iconographic work of Professor Julian Bucmaniuk, a well-known muralist who rendered traditional Byzantine iconography in brighter colours and with a greater emphasis upon realism. Bucmaniuk often utilized parishioners as models for his





images of holy men and women. The whole of the church participates in the Eastern Christian vision of sacred space, from the seven cupolas representing the sacraments and the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the interior iconography expressing the sanctification of human experience through the presence of the Divine.

CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS

The character-defining elements of St. Josaphat Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral include such features as:

- + mass, form, scale, and style;
- + nine-part cruciform plan with apse oriented to the east;
- + large central main dome open to the interior and six smaller, closed domes;
- + form and style of domes, set high on octagonal drums, including copper-covering, crowning wrought-iron crosses, wooden fascias and mouldings (painted to resemble glazed terra cotta complete with false mortar joints), Insulbrick corner drum piers, decorative drum cornices including cross formee motif, wood dentil and arched corbelled table details, inset wooden columns of the Tuscan order and blind arches with faux marble painted finish;
- + red brick veneer, pilasters and stringcourses of darker coloured brick, painted cream concrete crosses, painted concrete stringcourses, and wooden mouldings;
- + semi-circular, double-coursed brick arches over windows and concrete sills;
- + central, triangular pediment on front façade featuring statuary niche, dentillation, and decorative crosses;
- + fenestration pattern and style, including semi-circular arched windows on the main level and tall, narrow rectangular windows on the lower level;
- + long, wide entry staircase;
- + portico extending the full-width of the façade and featuring eight Tuscan columns;
- + arrangement and style of doors, including use of both double and single doors with semi-circular fanlights, all enclosed within painted concrete arches;
- + floor plan;
- + mass, form, style, and spatial arrangement of columns, arches, pendentives, domes, semi-domes, and balcony;
- + painted iconostasis and wall frescoes; and
- + black marble wall, stained glass windows.

Designated as a Municipal Historic Resource through Bylaw 17131 in April 2015.

Designated as a Provincial Historic Resource in August 1983.



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