



CITY OF EDMONTON HISTORIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Edmonton

BALFOUR MANOR

10139 - 116 STREET NW

DESCRIPTION OF HISTORICAL PLACE

Balfour Manor is a three-storey stucco-clad apartment building in the Streamline Moderne style. It is located mid-block on 116 Street, a prominent north-south thoroughfare in what is now known as the Wîhkwêntôwin neighbourhood.

HERITAGE VALUE

Balfour Manor possessed heritage value for its historical associations with designer and builder, Joseph Napoleon Côté (1888-1951), and with the development of apartment blocks in Edmonton in the last 1930s and early 1940s. It is also an elegant example of the Streamline Moderne architectural style.

Originally built in 1912 as Fire Hall No.4, Balfour Manor was remodelled and modernized by Joseph Napoleon Côté in 1939. A native of Quebec, Côté lived in Edmonton for thirty-five years and established himself as a significant local construction contractor. He relocated to Victoria, British Columbia after the end of the Second World War, where he continued in the contracting business with his son, Henry Côté.

Balfour Manor is representative of the conversion of existing buildings to apartment use, prompted by the housing shortage at the time of the outbreak of the Second World War. During the first decade after its construction, Balfour Manor operated as a fire hall and accommodated horse-drawn equipment. It was closed in 1921 as motorized fire equipment became standard.

The fire hall was then sold and operated as a garage until Côté adapted the building for use as a ten-unit apartment in the late 1930s.

Balfour Manor is also significant for its Streamline Moderne styling. Throughout North America, the Streamline Moderne, with its aerodynamic shapes and allusions to industrial design, was the commercial style of choice, reflected in everything from radio cabinets to ocean liners. It replaced the more elaborate ornamentation of the Art Deco style, heralding a new machine age and reflecting the austerity of the Great Depression.





CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS

Key elements which define the heritage character of Balfour manor include its:

- + mid-block location;
- + continuous use as an apartment block since its conversion in 1939;
- + form, scale and massing, as expressed by its symmetrical design, rectangular plan, and flat roof;
- + elements of the Streamline Moderne style, such as rounded front parapets, streamlined banding, curved entry elements, and horizontal speed lines on the front façade;
- + fenestration including the multi-paned double-hung wooden sash windows in triple assembly on the front façade;
- + original coal room and boiler dating to its use as a fire hall; and
- + surviving interior features dating from the conversion to apartments such as kitchenettes, hardwood floors, bathroom fixtures, and original stairs and balustrades.



Designated as a Municipal Historic Resource through Bylaw 13979 in July 2005.

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