



# KELLY RAMSEY BLOCK

10040-48-101A AVENUE NW

## CITY OF EDMONTON HISTORIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Edmonton

### DESCRIPTION OF HISTORICAL PLACE

Occupying a strategic corner on Rice Howard Way, a pedestrian friendly street in the heart of Edmonton's commercial district, the Kelly-Ramsey Block is comprised of two, visually distinct, four-storey buildings. The Ramsey building's light colored limestone front elevation contrasts with the Kelly building's dark brown brick principal facades. After a fire effectively destroyed the buildings in 2009, the original facades were salvaged and rebuilt as part of the podium of a new tower in 2013.

### HERITAGE VALUE

The Kelly Ramsey Block, valued for its association with two prominent and successful Edmonton entrepreneurs, presents well executed design renditions of two different architectural influences at a landmark location.

The Kelly Ramsey block is significant for its association with James Ramsey, who characterized the successful entrepreneurial spirit of Edmonton's pre World War I economic boom. Typical of this early period of rapid growth, John Kelly, a blacksmith turned developer, built and rented the Kelly Block to James Ramsey for the expanding James Ramsey Department Store. James Ramsey's growing business became one of the largest department stores in western Canada and led to Ramsey's purchase of the Kelly Building in 1925.

In 1927, Ramsey contracted the construction of the Ramsey Building, which connected at the party wall with the Kelly Building.

A successful business man and prominent citizen, James Ramsey, served on numerous boards and organizations, was named honorary colonel of the Edmonton Regiment and served as a Member of the Alberta Legislature from 1917 to 1921.

The Kelly and Ramsey Buildings are independently architecturally significant for their distinctive designs. The 1915 Kelly Building is designed in the Edwardian era commercial style. The Ramsey Building, designed by prominent Edmonton architectural firm Magoon and Macdonald, shows Chicago school influences. Magoon and MacDonald designed more than 30 Edmonton landmarks in the first half of the 20th century.





## CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS

### Ramsey Building (1927)

The character defining elements as expressed in the form, massing, materials and Chicago school design influences of the principal facade such as:

- + the openness of the first floor commercial retail plate glass shop front south facing façade;
- + the pressed metal dentilled cornice with rosettes at the first floor level which connects to and continues on the Kelly Building;
- + the second, third and fourth story two bay limestone principle façade defined by a continuous stone cill at the first floor level and a carved limestone bead moulding;
- + the fenestration pattern of the three windows in each bay;
- + the Chicago style recessed wood pivot windows with dentils;
- + the limestone spandrels with decorative rectangular panels and the limestone entablature with alternating swag and square frieze, stone; and
- + cornice and stone parapet with rectangular panel and balustrade design.



### Kelly Building (1915)

The character defining elements as expressed in the form, massing, materials and Edwardian era commercial style of the two principal facades such as:

- + the openness of the first floor commercial retail plate glass shop fronts;
- + the continuous pressed metal dentilled cornice with rosettes at the first floor level which continues on the Ramsey Building;
- + the dark brown brick with dark brown raked mortar joints;
- + the vertical bays expressed with major and minor brown brick piers and the modern ornate metal capitals and white rectangular bases;
- + fenestration patterns including the three - window bays on the south elevation and the two - window bays on the east elevation;
- + the double hung wood sash windows with brick flat arch lintels and cast stone cills;
- + the brick and mortar decorative elements including the light mortar outlining a rectangle with blue corner tiles and green brick infill in each of the spandrels and the light colored strips and light mortar on the major piers;
- + the white entablature capped with row of dentils supporting a rectangular metal cornice with embossed chevron frieze; and
- + the stone capped parapet wall advancing at the major piers.

*Designated as a Municipal Historic Resource through Bylaw 16441 in September 2013.*

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