



UNION BANK OF CANADA BUILDING

10053 - JASPER AVENUE NW

CITY OF EDMONTON HISTORIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



DESCRIPTION OF HISTORICAL PLACE

The Union Bank Building is a three storey rectangular brick and limestone-faced building with an ornate street façade. It is located on the south side of Jasper Avenue facing 100A Street in the heart of downtown Edmonton.

HERITAGE VALUE

The Union Bank Building is significant for the role it played in the banking and investment history of Edmonton for over 69 years. As the only one remaining of seven bank buildings built before World War 1, it demonstrates the presence of eastern Canadian banks on Jasper Avenue at that time. Its construction in 1910 reflected the expanding needs of the Union Bank's Edmonton branch during the period of Edmonton's economic boom.

The Union Bank Building has shown a remarkable continuity of ownership and occupancy by financial institutions. Purchased in 1928 by Winnipeg's James Richardson and Sons Ltd., it served as an Edmonton base for their grain trading and stock broking business and was occupied from 1969 by the North-West Trust Company, which owned the building from 1979 to 1982. The Union Bank Building is significant as the location of a variety of businesses that occupied offices in the building over several decades, including Cunard Steamship Co. Ltd.

The Union Bank Building demonstrates the sophisticated visions of its architect, the British-trained Roland Lines (1876-1916) who designed several other distinctive

Edmonton buildings, including the Alex Taylor School (1908), Strathcona Collegiate Institute (1909), and the nearby Canadian Permanent Building (1910) on Jasper Avenue). The Union Bank Building is significant for its solid imposing street façade with classical elements inspired by the Italian Renaissance; most notably, the rusticated ground floor, giant order pilasters and open-bed pediments with oversize keystones above the second-floor windows. The central entrances represented an innovation in functional design at the time, whereby the bank entrance also served upstairs offices and third floor living quarters for bank employees.

The Union Bank Building has acquired landmark value due to its position at the south end of 100A Street and because of the high visibility of its exposed party wall above a pedestrian plaza on the east side as one travels west on Jasper Avenue.





CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS

The heritage value of the Union Bank Building is expressed in such character-defining elements as:

- + the form and massing of the building on its visible façades;
- + original features on the north façade including the rusticated base with four ground level arched window openings, six giant order pilasters with ionic capitals, ten first and second-floor window openings, and all associated decorative brick and limestone elements;
- + sheet metal cornice with dentils;
- + light well and 10 window openings on the east and west façades, which reflect the original functional requirements of interior offices and living quarters for bank employees; and
- + ghost signs advertising Cunnard and Steamship Co. Ltd. and James Richardson and Sons on the east façade.

Designated as a Municipal Historic Resource through Bylaw 11114 in August 1996.



Visit edmonton.ca/historicresources to learn more

