



# WEST END TELEPHONE EXCHANGE

12021 - 102 AVENUE NW

## DESCRIPTION OF HISTORICAL PLACE

The 1913 West End Telephone Exchange is an Edwardian-era, two-storey masonry structure, with 1949 and 1962 additions, located in what is now known as the Wìhkwèntôwin neighbourhood.

## HERITAGE VALUE

The West End Telephone Exchange is significant for its architecture and associations with the development of Edmonton's public telephone utility and prominent Edmonton architect Allan Merrick Jeffers.

The West End Telephone Exchange is significant for its Edwardian influenced architecture as expressed through its modest ornamentation and strong symmetry.

The West End Telephone Exchange is significant for its association with development of Edmonton's municipally owned telephone utility. Edmonton was an early adopter of telephone technology. In 1881, Alex Taylor began Edmonton's first telephone service and operated it privately until 1905 when it was purchased by the City of Edmonton with the intention to operate it as a public utility. In order to provide adequate telephone service to its citizens, the city constructed two new telephone exchanges began in 1912; the North End Exchange in Spruce Avenue and the West End Telephone Exchange in Wìhkwèntôwin. These exchanges housed some of the first automatic switching stations in Canada, a major technological advancement relative to the standard manual switching systems.

## CITY OF EDMONTON HISTORIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



The West End Telephone Exchange is significant for its association with prominent Alberta Architect Allan Merrick Jeffers. Jeffers, who designed the building, served as Alberta's Provincial Architect from 1907 to 1912 and as Edmonton's City Architect from 1912 to 1914. Jeffers designed a number of significant building throughout Alberta, including the Legislature, Athabasca hall at the University of Alberta and Government House.



City of Edmonton Archives EA 97-695





## CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS

The Edwardian Style architecture of the West End Telephone Exchange is expressed in character defining elements such as:

- + prominent corner location and minimal setback;
- + form, scale and massing;
- + overall symmetry of the building;
- + distinctive raised parapet at the north gable;
- + distinctive multi-paned semicircular attic window;
- + horizontal masonry banding and cornice ;
- + the pattern, style and construction of all windows; and
- + cast concrete parapet cap, sills, keystone and door lintel inscribed with the words 'Telephone Exchange'.

*Designated as a Municipal Historic Resource through Bylaw 18012 in April 2018.*



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