

Quebec, Quebec  
**Health and Welfare Building**  
330 Gare du Palais

## **HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

The Health and Welfare Building, a prominent example of the Chateau style, was constructed in 1939-40 to the designs of Raoul Chenevert. It was built as both a terminal post office and the main post office for the city. When the present postal terminal was erected nearby in the 1950s, the building was adapted for use by other federal departments. The Department of Health and Welfare moved into the building in 1964. See FHBRO Building Report 89-1 35.

### **Reasons for Designation**

The Health and Welfare Building has been designated a Classified heritage property because of its historical associations, its design and craftsmanship, its architect, and its presence within its urban setting.

The historical associations of the building are with the importance of Quebec as a postal terminus, from the 18th Century on; the particular link between the railways and the development of postal service in Canada, here represented by the deliberate juxtaposition of the building with the 1915 Gare du Palais; and the generally buoyant phase of industrial development in Basse-Ville at the time of its construction. It is also evidence of the importance of the Chateau style at the time at both a national and a local level.

In its design and craftsmanship, it reflects the richness of massing, materials, and detailing associated with Chateau-style buildings, and is one of the most prominent works of architect Raoul Chenevert. Although no longer used as a post office, it remains an important landmark in Basse-Ville and is a key element in the current redevelopment of the area. It contributes in an important way to the architectural character of the city.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of the property is defined by its exterior façades and by the remnants of original interior finishes and fittings in the lobby.

The building is of irregular polygonal shape, and is visible from all sides. The Chateau style applies most easily to freestanding buildings such as this, and is used here to give a picturesque quality to the irregular massing. The various façades are continuous with each other, and are marked by a rich diversity of colour and texture. The walls are of brick, with stone at the base, around the openings, at belt courses

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**Health and Welfare Building (Continued)**

and on the decorative gables and frontispieces. The stonework is of high quality, with

numerous carved panels. Most of the original small-paned window sash survive, as does the massive copper roof with its metal cresting. Numerous dormers, gables and turrets add life to the fairly tight massing.

It is important that the design and detail of the façades be maintained through a regular program of inspection and repair. Any repointing, repair or restoration should be carried out with supervision from qualified conservation professionals. Where replacement is required, it should be done with the same materials and profiles. Where previous changes have occurred, as in a few of the windows and doors, restoration to the original appearance should be considered if further modifications are carried out. It would be difficult to add to the volume of the building without disturbing its heritage character, and this should be kept in mind when considering any future changes of use.

On the interior, most of the original layout and finishes appear to have been destroyed or obscured in the course of renovations. The remnants of original finishes which survive in the lobby and at the base of the main stair should be protected and maintained to provide continuity with the exterior, and as a point of reference for contemporary finishes and detailing.

1991.07.16