



STRATHCONA PUBLIC LIBRARY

8331 - 104 STREET

Description of Historic Place

The Strathcona Public Library is a two and a half storey brick building with stone detailing and projecting front gable. It occupies three city lots in the Old Strathcona Heritage Area, one block north of the area's main thoroughfare, Whyte Avenue, across from the Knox Presbyterian Church and next to Dr. Wilbert McIntyre Park.

Heritage Value

Serving as a library, as well as a cultural centre and meeting place, the Strathcona Public Library is important for its significance as the civic and architectural centrepiece of Old Strathcona.

Important for its continuous service as a public library from 1913 to present, it was also the focal point for Strathcona's community meetings, cultural events and social functions up to the 1950's. Strathcona's rapid residential growth, from its inception at the terminus of the Calgary and Edmonton Railway, led to town status in 1899 and incorporation as a city in 1907.

The Strathcona Library Society was formed in 1897, although it was not until 1913 that the construction of the Strathcona Public Library was realised. The proposal to build the library was originally a Strathcona initiative but, shortly after amalgamation of the two cities, the project was adopted by the City of Edmonton and its administration was assumed by the Edmonton Public Library Board.



The design by Arthur G. Wilson and David E. Herral, prominent Edmonton architects, in the quiet English Renaissance style, lends a dignity and status to the building befitting its situation in the community. Originally designed as a multi-purpose building, the main floor was used for library services, the upper floor was used as an auditorium, and the basement served as a men's reading room and meeting room.

Strathcona Public Library is a prominent community landmark. It is a familiar building, well used by a large cross-section of Strathcona residents. Its location, adjacent to the open space of Dr. Wilbert McIntyre Park, enhances its landmark status by increasing its visibility and strengthening its contribution to the heritage fabric of the historic area.

Character Defining Elements

The character defining elements are expressed in the form, massing and materials of the building, such as:

- the front façade projection with decorative pediment and oculus window;
- the main entrance doors flanked by Doric columns supporting an

- entablature with the words 'Public Library' carved into it;
 - the curved pediment above the entablature;
 - the front entrance wooden panel doors;
 - the stone and brick staircase to front door;
 - the stone detailing such as stone lintels and cills and the horizontal stone banding at the floor and window levels;
 - the metal cornice with low stone parapet;
 - the two cast decorative metal lights with glass globe;
 - the original coal shutes;
 - the patterns of fenestration and window styles;
 - the projecting exterior wall chimneys;
 - the cedar shingle roof;
 - the cupola;
- Interior:

The character defining elements as expressed in the original details and finishes such as:

- the two fire places;
- the decorative arches in the centre of the main room;
- the original wood mouldings, brackets and trims throughout;
- the front entrance vestibule wooden staircase.

