



MUNICIPAL ADDRESS

10035 156 ST NW

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

7921194;2;11

NEIGHBOURHOOD

West Jasper Place

YEAR BUILT

1978-81

ARCHITECT

Bittorf, Holland Christianson
Architects Ltd.

BUILDER

PCL Construction Ltd.

Description of Historic Place

Grant MacEwan Community College Jasper Place Campus consists of a large apricot-coloured Modern building situated on a nearly full block property, north of 100 Avenue and between 155 to 156 Streets in the West Jasper Place neighbourhood in Edmonton. The building consists of three staggered, separate long linear rectangular buildings connected by a web of gabled glass atriums. The building is clad in single material porcelain enamel tiles painted entirely in apricot and curved at the corners, intersected intermittently by bands of ribbon windows. A large two level parking lot is situated on the northwest corner of the lot and the surrounding property is landscaped with mature trees, grassed areas as well as an exterior sunken amphitheatre on the southeast corner of the property.

Heritage Value of Historic Place

Grant MacEwan Community College Jasper Place Campus, completed in 1981, is highly significant as an early and exceptionally designed Late Modern building in the industrial vernacular form in Edmonton, and is a superb example of the works of Edmonton architect, Bittorf Holland and Christianson Architects Ltd. The form echoes the trend of blank boxes for monumental form in Modern architecture, drawing inspiration from the sculptural form of rolling plains that enrich and soften the boxy architectural form. The building consists of three staggered rectangular boxes, accented with single material large, monochromatic porcelain metal enamel tiles and punctured with ribbons of windows. The joints add texture to the skin of the building as a by-product of the building process. The buildings are connected through a web of gabled and shed

roof gallerias with louvres in the gables, punctuated with large air vents, giving an impression of greenhouse, a nod to the area's agricultural history. Nearly every element in the building from the enamel panels, to the aluminium window sashes, to the landscape furniture and interior elements are painted apricot, inspiring the monikers of the 'Great Pumpkin' or the 'Big Block of Cheese'. The interior features vast light-filled areas, cohesively blurring the line between interior and exterior spaces, with ducts and exposed plumbing festooning the walls as décor. The overall effect is whimsical and dynamic, spawning a creative hub perfectly suited to the fine arts and performance departments housed in the building. The talented Edmonton-based architectural firm of Bittorf Holland Christianson Architects Ltd, formed in 1976, designed this ultra-modern high technology structure. The design team was headed up by Dennis Christianson, who like Bittorf, received a Masters in Architecture from Harvard Graduate School of Design. The firm also designed the Edmonton Public School Board's Centre for Education and J. Percy Page School, both employing a similar monochromatic finish to their respective exteriors.

The Grant MacEwan Community College Jasper Place Campus is also valued as a symbol of a rapid period of expansion of the college in the late 1970s to early 1980s. Grant MacEwan Community College was established in 1971 in Edmonton, founded to bring education to the community through several satellite campuses, and meet the needs of life-long education to further their career development. In its early development, the college functioned as a multi-campus college, operating out of several existing storefront-style buildings. In 1972-73, a Master Plan was developed for the future of the college, calling

The image shows a multi-level atrium with a prominent glass and steel roof structure. The space is characterized by yellow metal railings and pendant lights. A central staircase is visible, and the overall atmosphere is bright and modern. The caption is located in the top right corner of the image.

View from within the western atrium, 2018.
Donald Luxton & Associates | City of Edmonton

for a permanent core campus, while continuing on with the multi-campus model. The City Centre campus did not come to fruition until the early 1990s, opening in 1993, on 104 Avenue in downtown Edmonton. In 2004, the college became a degree- accredited university. The college expanded to serve the west end in 1973, with the opening of the fourth satellite campus in Jasper Place, leasing the Central Elementary School from the Edmonton School Board on the current site. In 1977-78 capital funding was approved to build the second purpose-built campus for the college on the current site at 100 Avenue and 156 Street. The campus was built to replace the old Jasper Place and Assumption Campuses. The new campus, with room for 1500 students, featured the latest in ultra-modern high technology, with space for dance, music, theatre, design arts, business administration, merchandising and travel. Its low-profile and subterranean levels were a product of heights restrictions on the property and the capacity needs of the school. The campus also included a 350-seat theatre named after the college's first president, John Haar and the college's central administration and president's office. The campus opened in 1980 and was dedicated in April 1981. For over 35 years, the facility was the primary campus for continuing education, learning resources, fine arts and performing programs until they moved to a new building at the downtown campus in 2017. The facility is now owned and occupied by the City of Edmonton, operating as a centre for non-profit groups that offer programs and services in the arts, recreation, wellness and learning, known as the Orange Hub.

The Grant MacEwan Community College Jasper Place Campus is further significant as the site of the Town of Jasper Place's first school and its continuation as an educational site for over 80 years. The property was first owned by the Canadian Pacific Railway, and eventually acquired by Roy F. Likey who subdivided the quarter section into grid-iron blocks as part

of the Jasper Place subdivision in 1906. The area was slow to settle on account of it being outside of the City of Edmonton and unserved by electricity and roads until the late 1940s. Beginning in the late 1920s, multiple lots were purchased for farms, transforming the muskeg landscape into a small urban agricultural community. The area's first school was constructed on the current property (Block 2), opening as West Jasper Place School in 1935. The five-room one-story Modernistic school held classes for grades 1 through 12. In 1944, a two-storey Modern school addition was constructed on the same lot. The sleepy agricultural community of Jasper Place was significantly impacted by the post Second World War boom, and was largely built-out by the mid 1950s, achieving Town status in 1950. In 1964, the Jasper Place public school board merged with the Edmonton School board after the town was annexed to the city that same year. The original 1935 school burnt down in 1967 and by 1972, the school board made the decision to phase out the school due to low attendance and maintenance issues. In 1973, the school was leased to Grant MacEwan Community College as the west end campus, and construction on the \$12.2 million complex began in 1978.

The Grant MacEwan Community College Jasper Place Campus is also significant as a landmark in the Jasper Place community for its exquisite and iconic Modern architecture and as a symbol of the early development of Grant MacEwan Community College in Edmonton. The eye-catching monochromatic enamel tiles, which distinguish the building, were manufactured in Ontario by PG Bell Inc. The structure was built by PCL Construction, an Edmonton-based contracting firm founded in 1906. Originally established in southern Saskatchewan, the company opened a branch office in Edmonton in 1922, and moved their headquarters to the city a decade later. PCL Construction expanded their reach throughout Canada during the middle of the 20th century, having opened their first international location, in the United States, several years prior to the construction of the Grant MacEwan Community College Jasper Place Campus.

Character-Defining Elements

The key elements that define the heritage character of the Grant MacEwan Community College Jasper Place Campus include, but are not limited to its:

- setting on a large full block lot between 155 and 156 Streets and 100 Avenue and Stony Plain Road in the West Jasper Place neighbourhood;
- siting in middle of block with the main entryway on the southeast side;
- landscape elements such as: sloped lot with two level parking lot for 140 cars at northwest corner of site; landscaped areas surrounding complex with mature trees and sloped plant bed tucked against building; depressed area in southeast corner of site with grassed amphitheatre; cast iron railings; board formed concrete walls to define spaces on site; stairs raised to main entryway on southeast side of property; original street furniture matching building (light posts with globe lights, bike racks, benches); globe lights;
- form, scale, and massing as expressed by its: three interconnected staggered rectangular buildings with curved corners connected by glass gabled and shed roof skylight concourses; shed roof skylights to provide light to basement on east and south façades;
- steel structural frame construction materials including: board formed concrete foundation and below ground and stair elements; square porcelain enamel metal tiles arranged in stack bond style;
- Late Modern-style details such as its: collection of three blank boxes connected by glass atrium all painted apricot; interior-exterior view of joints of porcelain enamel tiles serving as design element on walls; cohesion between interior and exterior spaces; narrow profiles of window sashes and door frames to emphasize the form; functional and design elements all painted apricot;
- Industrial Vernacular elements including: form of atrium representative of a greenhouse; the use of functional elements as design (louvres, exposed HVAC, rounded HVAC vents on roof);
- original fenestration including: fully glazed curtain walls of atriums with steel sashes and metal louvres with openable lights at roof peak; single groupings of ribbon and multi-light windows punctured into walls with steel sashes; double and single doors with single and double lights;
- primary entryways including: main entryway on southeast corner of site within grouping of multi-light windows and doors and multi-light wrap-around awning roof spanning south side to atrium; smaller entryway on southwest side of property with similar design features; and
- interior elements including: access to interior at third storey; board formed concrete and concrete block walls; exposed HVAC and electrical; gooseneck lights throughout interior; glass walled offices facing onto spiral staircase; glass walls with steel sashes; metal light fixtures built into balustrades; balustrades with metal grid pattern in atriums and stairways; 350-seat John L. Haar Theatre on fourth floor; interior elements painted apricot (everything apart from concrete walls and floors).