P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
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Item No. 9.1.1
Heritage Advisory Committee
October 8, 2024

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: September 18, 2024

SUBJECT: **Case HRTG-2024-00687: Request to Include 1300 Oxford Street, Halifax in the Registry of Heritage Properties for the Halifax Regional Municipality**

ORIGIN

Application for heritage registration by the property owner, First Baptist Church, Halifax.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Property owner-initiated heritage registration request.
- 1300 Oxford Street (the 'property') was constructed in 1948. A rear wing was added to the building in 1958.
- The property is a Neo-Gothic style building.
- The church was designed in the Neo-Gothic style by well-known Ontairo architect, Francis Bruce Brown. Halifax architect Allan Duffus was the supervising architect. The Brookfield Construction Company built the church.
- There are no financial implications identified.

RECOMMENDATION

Should 1300 Oxford Street, Halifax score 50 or more points on evaluation as a heritage property under the HRM Heritage Property Program, the Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC) recommends that Regional Council:

1. Set a date for a heritage hearing to consider the inclusion of the subject property in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality; and

2. Approve the request to include 1300 Oxford Street, Halifax, in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality, as shown on Map 1, as a municipal heritage property under the *Heritage Property Act*.

BACKGROUND

The property owner has applied to include the property located at 1300 Oxford Street, Halifax (Map 1) in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality. The subject property is situated on the west side of Oxford Street. The subject property contains a large Neo-Gothic Church building, which was constructed in 1958.

This application is being considered in accordance with Sections 14 (Recommendation as municipal heritage property) and 15 (Registration as municipal heritage property) of the *Heritage Property Act*.

HRM's Heritage Property Program

The purpose of the HRM Heritage Property Program is to help protect and conserve significant heritage resources including buildings, streetscapes, sites, areas, and conservation districts that reflect the rich heritage found in local communities throughout HRM. One of the principal aims of the Heritage Property Program is to recognize significant heritage resources through the inclusion of properties into the Municipal Registry of Heritage Property.

Under the Heritage Property Program, all registration applications for heritage buildings are evaluated by the HAC using "The Evaluation Criteria for Registration of Heritage Buildings in Halifax Regional Municipality" (Attachment A). The Evaluation Criteria for scoring a property and building are broken down into six categories as follows:

Criterion	Highest Possible Score
1. Age	25
2. Historical or Architectural Importance	20
3. Significance of the Architect/Builder	10
4. Architectural Merit	20
5. Architectural Integrity	15
6. Relationship to Surrounding Area	10
Total	100

Should the HAC score a property with more than 50 points on evaluation as a heritage property, a positive recommendation will be forwarded to Regional Council.

Nova Scotia Heritage Property Act

HRM's Heritage Property Program receives its authority from the *Heritage Property Act* which seeks:

> *"to provide for the identification, designation, preservation, conservation, protection and rehabilitation of buildings, public-building interiors, structures, streetscapes, cultural landscapes, areas and districts of historic, architectural or cultural value, in both urban and rural areas, and to encourage their continued use".*

Sections 14(2) and 15(1) under the *Heritage Property Act* require that notice of recommendation is given to the property owner at least thirty (30) days prior to any Council decision to include the property in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality. The property owner is also given an opportunity to address Council before they make a decision on the registration request. Should a positive recommendation be forwarded to Council, heritage staff will ensure the required notices are sent to the owners and deposited at the Registry of Deeds.

DISCUSSION

Heritage registration applications are evaluated by the HAC relative to six evaluation criteria outlined previously, and described in greater detail in Attachment A. To assist the HAC in their evaluation and scoring, staff offer the following comments based on the staff's research report (Attachment B).

1. Age:

The subject church building at 1300 Oxford Street was constructed in 1948 after the First Baptist Church on Spring Garden Road was destroyed by fire in 1942. The congregation briefly worshipped at St. Andrew's Church on Coburg Road during construction of their own church. In 1946, the principal officers of the Church made the plan for a new church building on Oxford Street. The cornerstone for the new church was laid by pastor Reverend Harvey L. Denton on November 13, 1948. The church was opened on April 16, 1950. A Christian Education Wing was added to the Church building in 1958.

Given its 1948 construction date, staff recommend a score of 3 points for Age.

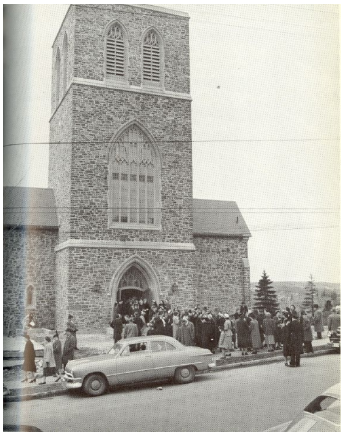


Figure 1: The opening Sunday of First Baptist Church, April 16, 1950

2. Historical Or Architectural Importance:

Important/unique architectural style or highly representative of an era.

The subject building is identified as a Neo-Gothic style building, distinguishing it from the Gothic revival style that was prevalent in the 1800s. Rather than merely imitating historical styles, Neo-gothic architecture expands upon Gothic elements to meet twentieth-century needs. This style is characterized by its grant size, symmetric facades and monochromatic exterior finishing. The subject building exemplifies this style, featuring non-structural wall buttresses, large windows with tracery, pointed arches over doors and windows, and stone cladding.

Neo-Gothic style is an important modern architectural style developed from the Gothic Revival style. For the moderate importance, staff recommend a score from 11 to 15.

3. Significance of Architect/Builder:

The architects of the subject church were Francis Bruce Brown and E.F. Ross Brisley from Ontario. Halifax architect Allan F. Duffus was the supervising Architect of this project. The Brookfield Construction Company were the contractors/builders.

Francis Bruce Brown (1899-1983) was a distinguished Canadian landscape painter and architect, known for his contributions to ecclesiastical architecture. Born in Toronto, he studied architecture at the University

of Toronto, earning a Bachelor and Master of Architecture. He joined his father's architectural firm, later forming Bruce Brown & Brisley, which designed over 100 churches across Canada, notably in the modern Gothic style. Brown served as an Architectural Consultant to the Baptist Convention's Home Mission and Church Edifice Boards and was President of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada.

Dr. Allan Duffus was a renowned Nova Scotian architect and preservationist, dedicated to preserving the province's architectural heritage. Educated at King's College, Dalhousie University, and McGill University, he founded Duffus, Romans, Kundzins, and Rounsefell Ltd., shaping Nova Scotia's landscape with projects like the Nova Scotia Museum and the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic. A leader in heritage conservation, he played a key role in restoring Halifax's Historic Properties and the Robertson Hardware Building. His efforts extended nationally, serving as a governor of Heritage Canada. Dr. Duffus received numerous honours, including the Nova Scotia Association of Architects Lifetime Achievement Award.

The Brookfield Construction Company, founded in the mid-19th century by English civil engineer John Brookfield, significantly shaped Halifax's architectural landscape. One of Nova Scotia's first firms to integrate various building trades under one roof, Brookfield revolutionized local construction. The company's early projects included key military installations like Fort Clarence and the Citadel Barracks, which were part of Halifax's extensive fortifications. Under John's son, Samuel M. Brookfield, the firm expanded its portfolio to include notable structures such as the Halifax Post Office, All Saints' Cathedral, and St. Andrew's United Church. Beyond Nova Scotia, the company contributed to the reconstruction of St. John's, Newfoundland, following the Great Fire of 1892. By 1950, when Brookfield constructed the First Baptist Church at 1300 Oxford Street, the company was managed by the Roper family, who had taken over in the early 20th century. Under Henry and later Harry Leamon Roper, the firm continued its legacy, completing major projects like the Victoria General Hospital Nurses Residence and Queen Elizabeth High School. Both the Brookfield and Roper families were known for their civic leadership and philanthropy, making lasting contributions to Halifax's community life.

All the architects and builders who contributed to this church building had influence across Canada, Staff recommend a score of 7 to 10 for the significance of the architect/builder.

4. Architectural Merit:

Construction Type/Building Technology

The church's construction combines reinforced concrete columns, steel beams, and wood, reflecting mid-20th century building practices. The main structure consists of reinforced concrete, while steel beams support the longer spans, and wood is used for floors and roofs to reduce costs. Concrete and masonry walls, finished with stucco inside and stone outside, fill the spaces between the columns. As steel became more popular in construction in the twentieth century, traditional load-bearing masonry walls were no longer necessary, while large buildings still used stone cladding for exterior decorations. This material combination was common for large institutional buildings like churches, offering strength, cost efficiency, and easier assembly.

As relatively common construction methods adopted in the church, staff recommend a score between 1 and 3 points.

Style

1300 Oxford Street is an excellent example of the Neo-Gothic church building. The character-defining elements of 6038 Charles Street include, but are not limited to:

- Square tower with:
    - twin Gothic louvres framed with sandstone on the top level;
    - large Gothic window framed with tracery and sandstone on the middle level;and
    - Gothic entranceway framed with sandstone and transom with tracery, above a large door;

- The church hall with stone cladding, sandstone surrounding fenestration and a large gable roof;
- The rear wing with stone cladding, sandstone surrounding fenestration, and a gabled hall;
- Cross gables with entranceways near the front of the building and larger cross gables near the middle of the building;
- Gothic windows with tracery framed with sandstone on the upper level and paired vertical windows on the lower level;
- The stained glass memorial windows and liturgical windows;
- Wood exterior doors with stone surroundings and wrought iron hinges;
- Stone and sandstone buttresses;
- Rough-cut stone cladding;
- Copper downspouts; and
- Granite pavers leading to the main entrance.

As a moderately rare example of a Neo-Gothic church building with a high level of integrity, staff recommend a score of 4 to 6.

Figure 2: South and east elevations, July 2024

Figure 3: North elevation, July 2024

5. Architectural Integrity:

The architectural integrity of the church remains high, with no significant alterations to the main façade, north elevation, or south elevation. Key Neo-Gothic features, such as stone and sandstone buttresses, pointed arch stained glass windows, and stone cladding, are all well-preserved.

In 1958, a three-storey Christian Education Wing was added at the rear of the church. The addition's rough-cut stone cladding and sandstone window surrounds match the original materials, maintaining the same architectural language. Although built in different years, the wing is part of the original design. In 1947, the architect who designed the church adjusted the original plan by simplifying some architectural designs, while respecting the the original design's layout, massing, and material. Therefore, the 1958 addition contributes to the heritage value and completes the architectural integrity.

There are few exterior alterations identified and the rear addition contributes to the architectural integrity, staff recommend a score from 11 to 15 points for architectural integrity.

6. Relationship to Surrounding Area:

The church is located on the west side of Oxford Street, adjacent to a two-storey parsonage to the south and surrounded by mid-rise residential and institutional buildings of Dalhousie University. A railway crossing to the west separates the church from a low-density residential neighbourhood. The church's massing is modest, standing between the larger university buildings and smaller residential homes, serving as a transitional structure. Its roofline and tower introduce variation to the Oxford Street skyline. The stone

exterior contrasts with nearby residential buildings but aligns with the stone facades on the university campus, creating architectural harmony within its mixed context.

In conclusion, the church's design is disguised from its surroundings while maintaining a harmonious relationship with it, staff recommend a score of 1 to 5 points.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The HRM costs associated with advertising and processing this application can be accommodated within the approved 2024/2025 operating budget for C340 – Culture, Heritage and Planning Information Services.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The community engagement process for heritage registrations is consistent with the intent of the HRM Community Engagement Strategy. The level of community engagement was information sharing achieved through public access to the required Heritage Advisory Committee meeting. As a provision of the *Heritage Property Act*, no registration of a municipal heritage property shall take place until the Regional Council has given the owner of the property an opportunity to be heard.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no significant environmental implications associated with the recommendations in this report.

ALTERNATIVE

The Heritage Advisory Committee may choose to refuse the application to include 1300 Oxford Street, Halifax in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality if the property scores less than 50 points based on the evaluation criteria. In doing so, the application will not proceed to the Regional Council for evaluation.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The *Heritage Property Act*

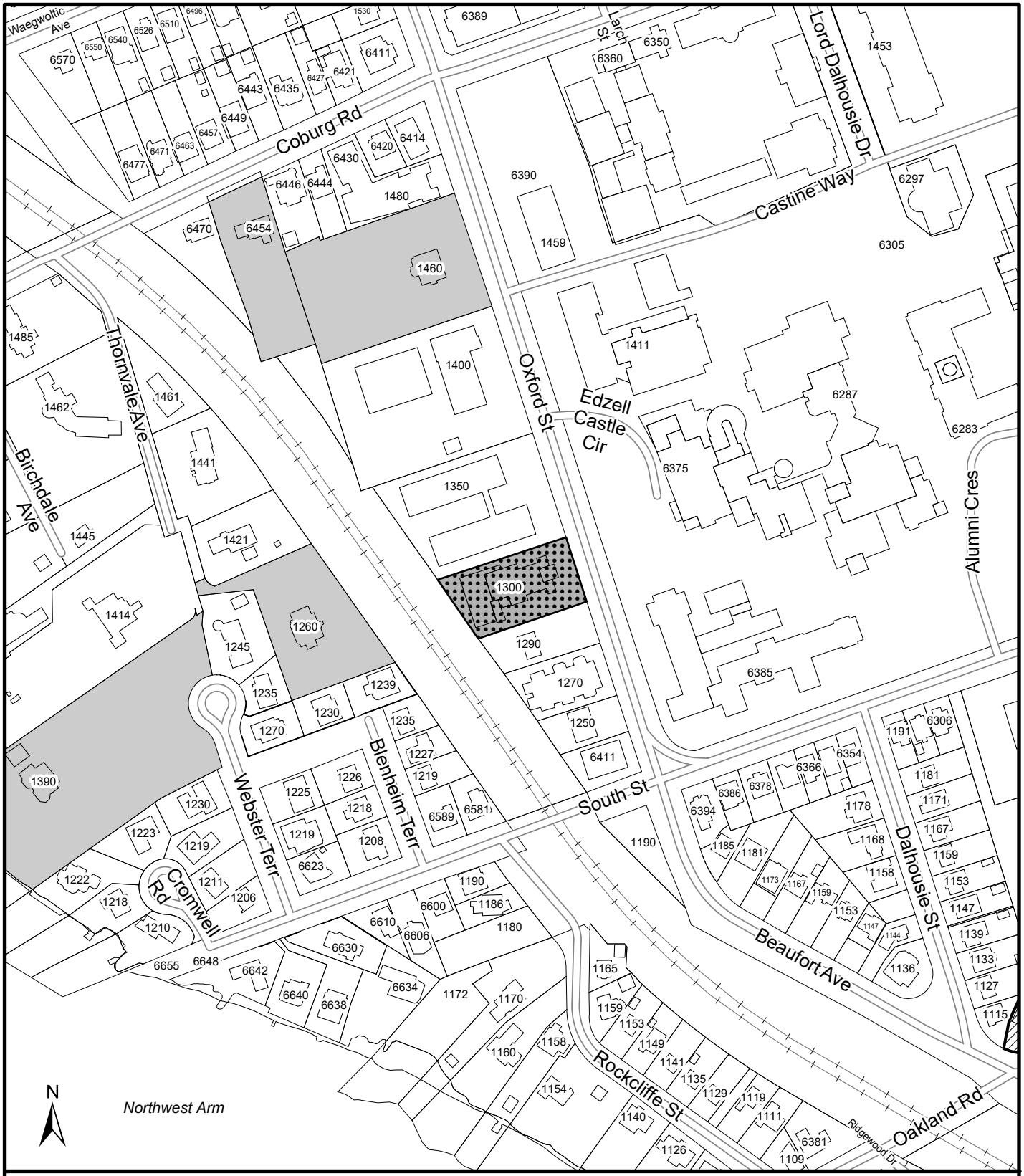
ATTACHMENTS

Map 1: Location Map

Attachment A: Evaluation Criteria
Attachment B: Staff Research Report

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Shaoqiu Gong, Planner I – Heritage, 902.233.9826



Map 1 - Location Map

1300 Oxford Street,
Halifax

Registered Heritage Property

Subject Property

HALIFAX

0 25 50 75 Meters

HRM does not guarantee the accuracy\of any representation on this plan.

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Attachment A

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

HERITAGE PROPERTY PROGRAM

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Heritage Property Program **March 2013**

EVALUATION CRITERIA
FOR REGISTRATION OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS (Revised 2004)

1. AGE

Age is probably the single most important factor in the popular understanding of the heritage value of buildings. The following age categories are based on local, national and international occasions that may be considered to have defined the character of what is how the Halifax Regional Municipality and its architecture.

Date of Construction	Points	Timeline
1749 - 1785	25	Halifax Garrison Town to the Loyalist migration
1786 – 1830	20	Boom period following construction of Shubenacadie Canal
1831 – 1867	16	From Boom to Confederation
1868 – 1899	13	Confederation to the end of the 19th century
1900 - 1917	9	Turn of the Century to Halifax Harbour Explosion
1918 - 1945	5	The War Years
1945 - Present	3	Post-War

** Maximum score of 25 points in this category*

2. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE

A building can receive points for:

A) Having specific associations with important occasions, institutions, personages and groups,

OR

B) For being architecturally important unique/representative of a particular period.

2A) Relationship to Important Occasions, Institutions, Personages or Groups

Nationally	Points	Comments
Intimately Related	16 - 20	
Moderately Related	11 - 15	
Loosely Related	1 - 10	
Provincially	**Points**	**Comments**
Intimately Related	11 - 15	
Moderately Related	6 - 10	
Loosely Related	1 - 5	

Locally	**Points**	**Comments**
Intimately Related	11- 15	
Moderately Related	6 - 10	
Loosely Related	1 - 5	
No relationship to important occasions, institutions, personages or groups.	0	

** Maximum score of 20 points in this category, scoring from one of the three categories only*

2B) Important/Unique Architectural Style or Highly Representative of an Era

Importance	**Points**	**Comments**
Highly important, Unique, or representative of an era	16 - 20	
Moderately important, Unique, or representative of an era	11 - 15	
Somewhat important, or representative of an era	10 - 1	
Not important, Unique, or representative of an era	0	

** Maximum score of 20 points in this category.*

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF ARCHITECT/BUILDER

Is the structure representative of the work of an architect or builder of local, provincial or national importance?

Status	**Points**	**Comments**
Nationally	7 - 10	
Provincially Significant	4 - 6	
Locally Significant	1 - 3	
Not Significant	0	

****** *Maximum score of 10 points in this category.*

4. ARCHITECTURAL MERIT

The assessment of architectural merit is based on two factors:

A) Construction type/building technology: which refers to the method by which the structure was built (early or rare uses of materials), and building techniques;

AND

B) Style: which refers to the form or appearance of the architecture.

Construction Type/Building Technology		
A) Construction type	**Points**	**Comments**
Very rare/ early example	7 - 10	
Moderately rare/ early	4 - 6	
Somewhat rare/ early example	1 - 3	
Not rare/ common example	0	
B) Style	**Points**	**Comments**
Very rare/ early example	7 - 10	
Moderately rare/ early	4 - 6	
Somewhat rare/ early example	1 - 3	
Not rare/ common example	0	

** Maximum score of 10 points for Construction Type, and a maximum score of 10 for Style - a total maximum of 20 points in this category.*

5. ARCHITECTURAL INTEGRITY

Architectural Integrity refers to the extent to which the building retains original features/ structures/ styles, not the state of the building's condition.

Architecture	Consider any additions/ removal/ alterations to windows, doors, porches, dormers, roof lines, foundations, chimneys, and cladding.	
Exterior	**Points**	**Comments**
Largely unchanged	11 - 15	
Modest changes	6 - 10	
Major changes	1 - 5	
Seriously compromised	0	

****** Maximum score of 15 points in this category.*

6. RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING AREA

Points	Comments
6 - 10	The building is an important architectural asset contributing to the heritage character of the surrounding area.
1 - 5	The Architecture is compatible with the surrounding area and maintains its heritage character.
0	Does not contribute to the character of the surrounding area**.**

** Maximum score of 10 points in this category*.

SCORING SUMMARY

Property	Date Reviewed	Reviewer

Criterion	Highest Possible Score	Score Awarded
1. Age	25	
2. a) Relationship to Important Occasions, Institutions, Personages or Groups **OR** 2. b) Important, Unique Architectural Style, or Highly Representative of an Era	20	
3. Significance of Architect or Builder	10	
4. a) Architectural Merit: Construction type/building technology	10	
4. b) Architectural Merit: Style	10	
5. Architectural Integrity	15	
6. Relationship to Surrounding Area	10	
Total	**100**	

SCORE NECESSARY FOR DESIGNATION **50**

Designation Recommended? **YES** **NO**

COMMENTS:

Attachment B

Research Report

1300 Oxford Street, Halifax

Prepared by:
HRM Planning & Development
Shaoqiu Gong, Planner I

18 September 2024

HALIFAX

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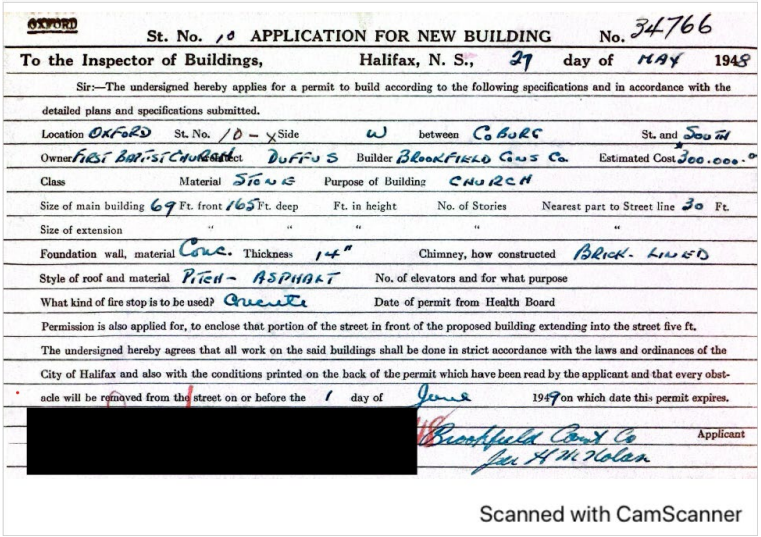
Age

1300 Oxford Street, Halifax, known as First Baptist Church, is located within the block bound by Coburg Road to the north, Oxford Street to the east, South Street to the south and Blenheim Terrace to the west. The church building located at this property will hereafter be referred to as simply the subject building.

First Baptist Church was formerly located on the northeast corner of Spring Garden Road and Queen Street and was destroyed by fire in March 1942 (Figure 1). For the next eight years, the congregation worshipped at St. Andrew's Church Hall on Coburg Road. In 1946, the principal officers of the Church planned for a new church building on Oxford Street, following the westward trend of Halifax's population. The church hired the architectural firm Bruce Brown & Brisley to design the new church (Figure 2). The cornerstone was laid by pastor Reverend Harvey L. Denton on November 13, 1948 (Figure 3). The church was dedicated on April 16, 1950 (Figure 4).[1]

The architectural drawings depict a large rear wing designed to accommodate the recreation hall, chapel, robing rooms, library, choir, and church parlour(Figure 19). However, this wing was not built in 1948 for unspecified reasons. It was not until 1957, when the congregation hired the Fundy Construction Company, that a rear wing was constructed which is now referred to as the Christian Education Wing. With some delay in millwork, the new wing was completed on May 5, 1958 and was designed to be compatible with the 1948 church building.[1]

Figure 1: Former First Baptist Church on Queen Street, Halifax, depicting fire aftermath[2]



OXFORD St. No. 10 APPLICATION FOR NEW BUILDING No. 34766

To the Inspector of Buildings, Halifax, N. S., 29 day of MAY 1948

Sir:—The undersigned hereby applies for a permit to build according to the following specifications and in accordance with the detailed plans and specifications submitted.

Location OXFORD St. No. 10 – X Side W between COBURG St. and 300 FT

Owner FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH Architect DUFFUS Builder BROOKFIELD CONS CO. Estimated Cost 300.000.00

Class Material STONE Purpose of Building CHURCH

Size of main building 69 Ft. front 165 Ft. deep Ft. in height No. of Stories Nearest part to Street line 30 Ft.

Size of extension " " " " "

Foundation wall, material CONC. Thickness 14" Chimney, how constructed BRICK - LINED

Style of roof and material PITCH - ASPHALT No. of elevators and for what purpose

What kind of fire stop is to be used? CONCRETE Date of permit from Health Board

Permission is also applied for, to enclose that portion of the street in front of the proposed building extending into the street five ft.

The undersigned hereby agrees that all work on the said buildings shall be done in strict accordance with the laws and ordinances of the City of Halifax and also with the conditions printed on the back of the permit which have been read by the applicant and that every obstacle will be removed from the street on or before the 1 day of June 1949 on which date this permit expires.

[redacted] Brookfield Cons Co Applicant

Jas H McNolan

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Figure 2: Building permit for the subject building, 1948[3]

Figure 3: Cornerstone with 'A.D. 1948' Inscription (17 July 2024)

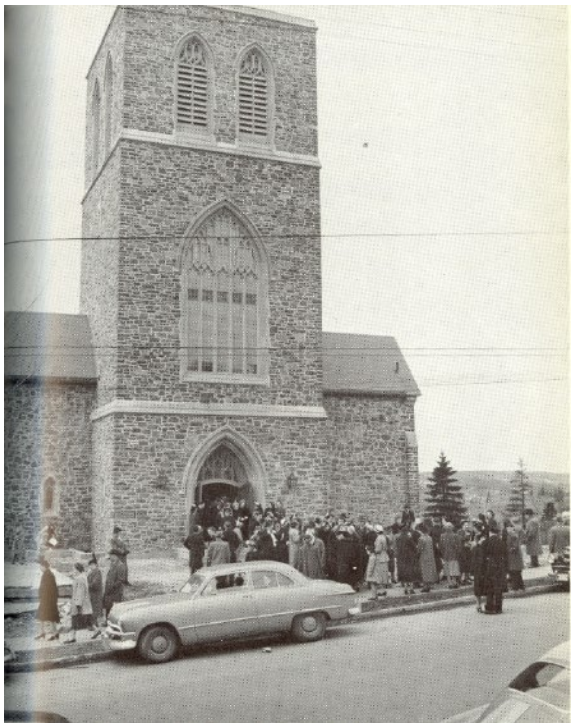

Figure 4: The opening Sunday of First Baptist Church, April 16, 1950[1]

Historical or Architectural Importance

Relationship to Important Occasions, Institutions, Personages or Groups

Halifax's Baptist Church Community

The congregational history of Halifax's First Baptist Church is woven deeply into the history of Halifax, and Nova Scotia in its entirety, and can be traced back to 1827. [1]

In 1824, when Nova Scotia was a dependent colony of the British Empire, a small group of 16 parishioners from St. Paul's Episcopal Church felt compelled to leave their church. A recent vacancy in the rectorship had been filled by an appointee chosen not by the congregation, but by the King, the Head of the Church of England. This lack of autonomy prompted the group to meet in each other's homes for prayer and discussion, seeking a denomination that respected their desire for independence. After much consideration and advice from Newton Baptist Theological Institution in Massachusetts, the group decided to form a Baptist Church. They purchased land on Granville Street and constructed a stone chapel, which was opened for public worship on September 30, 1827, as Granville Street Baptist Church (Figure 5). A year later, the church joined the Nova Scotia Baptist Association, significantly contributing to the growth and development of the Baptist denomination in the Maritime Provinces. The church also played a prominent role in the founding of Acadia College (later Acadia University) and established foreign mission work in the 1870s.[1,4]

When the Granville Street church building became too small for the congregation, a new church was constructed, in the Gothic Revival style, at Spring Garden Road and Queen Street, with its opening service held on April 10, 1887. Following a new Act of Incorporation, the church was renamed from Granville Street Baptist Church to The First Baptist Church (Figure 6 and Figure 7). In the years that followed, the church thrived. By 1914, the year World War I began, membership numbers reached 378. With Halifax serving as a military center, the church supported the war effort by offering its hall as a club room for soldiers and sailors in collaboration with south-end churches and the YMCA[1,4].

Figure 5: 1878 Hopkins Halifax Atlas, showing the Baptist Church on Grantville Street.

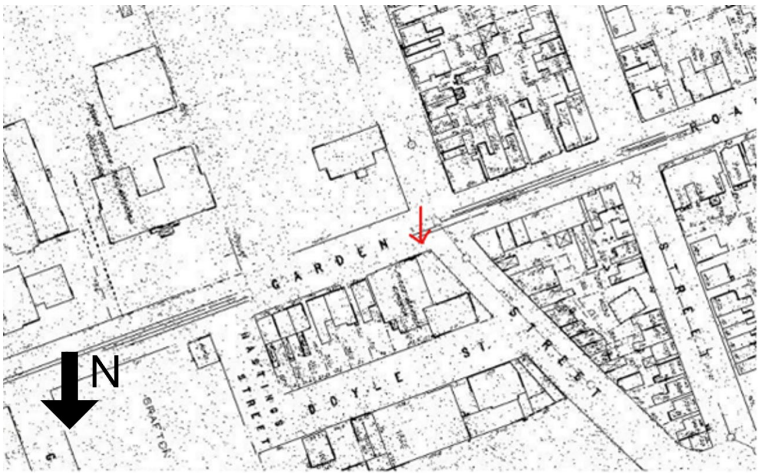

Figure 6: 1918 H.B. Pickins Map, showing the First Baptist Church on Spring Garden Street.

Figure 7: First Baptist Church on Spring Garden Street, designed in the Gothic Revival style, and Dr. Arthur Crawley Chute. 1890s[5]

In 1917, a catastrophic explosion occurred when two ships collided in Halifax Harbour, resulting in the largest human-made explosion of the time. Approximately two thousand people were killed in the Halifax Explosion by debris, fires, and collapsing buildings, while nine thousand others were injured. Despite considerable damage to the church, repairs were swiftly completed, and the church hall was immediately made available to the Rhode Island Hospital unit and the YMCA, and as a clothing depot with supplies provided by the T. Eaton Company in Toronto[1,4].

In the years that followed, the church experienced growth and prosperity, as beloved ministers, committed leaders, and an active congregation welcomed members of other denominations into a "church fellowship" to worship together. In 1935, the church initiated joint summer services with St. Matthew's United Church, a collaboration that proved highly satisfactory. September 1939 marked the outbreak of World War II, during which many young men from the congregation left to serve overseas.[1,4]

On March 21, 1942, the First Baptist Church on Spring Garden Road, then 56 years old, was destroyed by fire. Despite the many challenges posed by wartime conditions, the congregation enthusiastically decided to rebuild. St. Andrew's United Church generously provided quarters for the congregation for the next eight years while the new church on Oxford Street was under construction. On April 16, 1950, the new church building, now named First Baptist Church of Halifax, opened at its new location on Oxford Street.[1,4]

Figure 8: Spring Garden Road First Baptist Church during the fire, March 21, 1942[1]

The new building was constructed in the Noe-Gothic style and had a seating capacity of 600 people. The church hall, stage, and classrooms were located under the sanctuary.[1,4] A three-tier Casavant Pipe Organ Opus 1994 was installed in 1950 and restored by Casavant in 1984. The interior of the sanctuary showcased excellent craftsmanship, with detailed trim on the doors, and oak ceiling, railings, and pews. The floors were hardwood, with carpeting in the aisles. Twenty stained glass windows of varying sizes were installed, several of which were memorial windows gifted by families in honour of members who had provided great service to the church over the years.

The church congregation remained vibrant during the eight years they met at St. Andrew's Church, and membership continued to grow after the new church opened. Within five years, the congregation grew to 911 members: 666 residing in the city, 141 non-residents, and 104 fellowship members. Recognizing the need for additional space to accommodate Christian education, general church activities, and administration, the church decided in 1956 to build a Christian Education wing. This new wing included an Assembly Room, a Primary Classroom, a Crèche, a Rumpus Room, a main kitchen, a church parlour with a small kitchen, a Board room, a Music Room, the Senior Minister's Office, and small rooms for Archives, the Library, and the Communion Room. A successful fundraising campaign was launched, and on May 4, 1958, the new Christian Education Wing was opened during the morning worship service, bringing the total square footage of the church to nearly 33,000.[1,4]

Since that time, church membership has experienced a decrease, reducing the need for further expansion. A wide variety of community groups, as well as film crews, rehearsing musical groups, and other volunteer organizations, use the available space. Two new projects were generously funded and completed in 2012, the year of the church's 185th anniversary: an elevator was installed between the three levels of the Christian Education wing to improve accessibility, and a financial gift was offered to New Horizons Baptist Church to aid in the construction of a church development project for their members.[1,4]

Important / Unique Architectural Style or Highly Representative of an Era

Designed by Ontario architect Francis Bruce Brown, the subject property is an example of the Neo-Gothic style (1900-1945). The style is characterized by its grand size, symmetric facades and monochromatic stone or brick exterior finishes. The style borrows design elements from the Gothic Revival style that was prevalent from 1830 to 1900[6], which reflects the style of the previous First Baptist Church, built in 1887 and lost in 1942.

Size and the absence of polychrome clearly differentiate Neo-Gothic from the nineteenth-century Gothic Revival. The compositional organization and grandness of design are often likened to Beaux-Arts Classicism, while the decorative details and forms are derived from Gothic prototypes, primarily from the English Perpendicular Gothic and to a lesser extent the Early English Gothic style. Rather than imitate the historical, there is the intention to expand the spatial organization of the earlier Gothic styles. While historical references remain evident in details, the new composition adapts to the different requirements of the twentieth century, resulting in a highly formalized building that is distinguishable from its nineteenth-century predecessors by sheer size, the lack of asymmetrical or picturesque quality, and uniform, almost monochromatic exterior finishes[6].

The subject building displays many Neo-Gothic elements. The elevations are articulated by a series of wall buttresses. Large windows are glazed with traditional tracery but utilize modern construction practices. The windows are divided horizontally by storey. Doors and windows are topped with a pointed arch. A square tower without spires is the only feature piercing the otherwise flat roofline. Stone finish covers all exterior walls.[6]

The subject building is a representative example of a mid-twentieth century Neo-Gothic style church.

Significance of Architect or Builder

Architect

The architects of the subject building were Francis Bruce Brown and E.F. Ross Brisley from Ontario.[7] Halifax architect Allan F. Duffus served as the supervising architect.[8]

Francis Bruce Brown

Francis Bruce Brown (1899-1983) was a distinguished Canadian landscape painter and architect, recognized for his substantial contributions to ecclesiastical architecture. Born in Toronto, he was the son of architect John Francis Brown (1866-1942). Brown served in the Canadian Forces during World War I, including service in Siberia. Upon his return to Toronto in 1919, he pursued studies in architecture at the University of Toronto, where he graduated with honours in 1923 with a Bachelor of Architecture, followed by a Master of Architecture in 1925. His talent as a delineator was evident during his studies, and many of his student drawings are preserved at the University of Calgary.[9]

Brown was awarded a travelling scholarship that allowed him to study at the Fontainebleau School of Fine Arts in France from 1923 to 1924. He subsequently joined his father's architectural firm, John Francis Brown, in Toronto, and became a full partner in 1926. After his father's death in 1942, he formed a new partnership with E.F. Ross Brisley, creating the firm Bruce Brown & Brisley, which later included his son Douglas Brown in 1962, becoming Brown, Brisley & Brown. This firm was renowned for designing over 100 churches across Canada, reflecting a commitment to the modern Gothic styles, which distinguished Brown's work from the classical revival and modern styles prevalent among his peers[9].

As an architect, Brown devoted much of his career to the design of Protestant churches, succeeding his father as the Architectural Consultant to the Home Mission and Church Edifice Boards of the Baptist Convention in Ontario and Quebec. Notable achievements include the Divinity College and Chapel at McMaster University in Hamilton, completed in 1950, which earned him an honorary doctorate from the university in 1958. Brown also held prestigious positions such as President of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada from 1964 to 1965, Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects, and an Honorary Fellow of the American Institute of Architects. In addition to his architectural prominence, Brown also pursued landscape painting, encouraged by his good friend, Alfred Joseph Casson, a member of the Group of Seven.[9,10]

Francis Bruce Brown retired in 1972, and his son Douglas took over the firm. He died in Toronto on July 30, 1983, leaving behind a legacy of ecclesiastical architecture that spans the country. The Canadian Architectural Archives at the University of Calgary holds a significant collection of his original drawings and slides, documenting his work and the evolution of his firm from 1946 to 1972.[11]

Figure 9: Weston Park Baptist Church, designed by Francis Bruce Brown, is a Toronto Designated Heritage Property.[12]

Dr. Allan Ferguson Duffus

Dr. Allan Duffus (1914-1997) was a distinguished architect and preservationist, deeply committed to the architectural heritage of Nova Scotia. Born in Halifax, he was the son of Colonel Allan W.

Duffus and Gwen Duffus. Dr. Duffus' illustrious career in architecture began after completing his education at King's College School in Windsor, followed by studies in pre-engineering at Dalhousie University and degree in architecture from McGill University. In 1946, Dr. Duffus established his architectural practice, becoming a founding partner of the firm Duffus, Romans, Kundzins, and Rounsefell Ltd. Throughout his career, he was responsible for a broad range of projects across Nova Scotia. His work included residences, churches, academic institutions, offices, and institutional buildings. Notable projects include: the Nova Scotia Museum (1970), Library at Kings College (1991), and the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic (1981) in Halifax. He also oversaw the completion of the east front of the Cathedral of All Saints, demonstrating his expertise in ecclesiastical architecture.[13,14]

A dedicated advocate for heritage conservation, Dr. Duffus played a pivotal role in restoring and preserving historic structures. His firm successfully restored Halifax's Historic Properties, which revitalized the old waterfront area. Among his restoration projects, he notably led the restoration of the Robertson Hardware Building, which became part of the Maritime Museum complex (Figure 11). Dr. Duffus' contributions extended beyond architectural design to leadership roles in heritage preservation organizations. As a long-serving member and past president of the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia, and a founding member of the Landmarks Commission of Halifax, he was a passionate force in the field of restoration. His service as Governor of Heritage Canada from 1974 to 1979 further highlights his national impact on preservation efforts. Dr. Duffus was also a published author, co-authoring *Thy Dwellings Fair* and contributing to *More Stately Mansions*, which focused on the architectural heritage of Nova Scotia's churches. His dedication to preserving historic buildings was evident in his successful efforts to save the Scott Manor House in Bedford.[14]

Upon his retirement in 1980, Dr. Duffus transitioned to consulting in conservation, where he continued to work on notable projects such as the restoration of Greenwood Cottage in Sherbrooke and the Windsor Junction Railway Station. From 1984 to 1991, he acted as a special consultant, contributing to the conservation of significant landmarks, including Province House, the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, the Old Town Clock on the Citadel, and St. George's Church[14]. His professional excellence earned him numerous accolades, including the Nova Scotia Association of Architects Lifetime Achievement Award, an honorary fellowship with the American Institute of Architects, and an honorary Doctor of Engineering from the Technical University of Nova Scotia (TUNS). He was also a Fellow and past president of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, as well as the Nova Scotia Association of Architects[14].

Figure 10: Portrait of Dr. Allan Ferguson Duffus

Figure 11: Dr. Allan Duffus led the Robertson Hardware Building restoration project, which became part of the Maritime Museum complex. Photo taken in 2009.

Builder

Brookfield Construction Company

The Brookfield Construction Company constructed First Baptist Church in 1948, and was a pivotal force in shaping the architectural landscape of Halifax and beyond. Founded in the mid-19th century by English civil engineer John Brookfield (Figure 12), the company was among the first in Nova Scotia to establish a general contracting firm that integrated various building trades under one roof. This approach not only revolutionized the local construction industry but also set a standard for future enterprises[15].

John Brookfield's early works included significant military installations such as Fort Clarence, York Redoubt, and the Citadel Barracks, which were part of the extensive fortifications of Halifax - one of the largest military projects in the British Empire at the time. His son, Samuel M. Brookfield, succeeded him and expanded the company's portfolio to include many of Halifax's most iconic structures. These projects included the Academy of Music (later known as the Majestic Theatre), the Halifax Post Office, the MT&T Building, and the YMCA. Religious architecture was also a significant part of their work, with Samuel overseeing the construction of All Saints' Cathedral and St. Andrew's United Church[15].

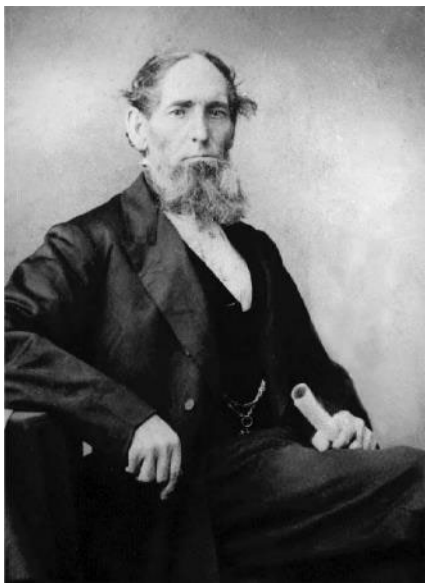

Figure 12: Portrait of John Brookfield

Figure 13: Old Post Office (Art Gallery of Nova Scotia), one of the representative projects of Brookfield Construction Company

Beyond Nova Scotia, the Brookfield Construction Company made notable contributions to the reconstruction efforts following the Great Fire of 1892 in St. John’s, Newfoundland. This included the rebuilding of the Anglican Cathedral in St. John’s. Additionally, the company constructed the Bank of Nova Scotia building in Saint John, New Brunswick.[15]

By the time the First Baptist Church was constructed in 1948, the Brookfield Construction Company was under the management of the Roper family, who had taken the helm in the early 20th century. Henry Roper, a skilled carpenter who joined the company in 1892, quickly rose through the ranks and became the company’s manager by 1907. His leadership was marked by a commitment to excellence and innovation, which he passed on to his son, Harry Leamon Roper.

Harry took over as president in 1956, having already played a significant role in the company for many years. Under the Ropers' leadership, the company continued to thrive, undertaking major projects such as the Victoria General Hospital Nurses Residence, the Halifax Vocational School, and Queen Elizabeth High School.[15]

Figure 14: Portrait of Henry Roper

Figure 15: Portrait of Harry Leamon Roper

The influence of the Brookfield and Roper families extended well beyond the construction industry. Samuel M. Brookfield, before the company's transition to Roper management, was a prominent civic leader and philanthropist, while the Ropers also made substantial contributions to the community. Harry Roper was actively involved in the Halifax Construction Association, chaired various committees, and served as president of the Canadian Construction Association. Both families were known for their philanthropic efforts and their involvement in various social causes, leaving a lasting impact on Halifax's civic and cultural life.[15]

Architectural Merit

Construction Type or Building Technology

The construction of the church incorporates a combination of reinforced concrete columns, steel beams, and wood, reflecting the hybrid construction methods characteristic of mid-twentieth century architecture.

Architectural and construction drawings confirm that the structural framework primarily consists of reinforced concrete. The concrete columns, reinforced with steel bars, provide strength and durability. Wide flange steel beams are utilized to support long spans and offer structural support for wooden elements, such as floors and roofs. This approach leveraged steel's high strength-to-weight ratio for spanning long distances, while wood was employed for cost-effectiveness and ease of construction. Additionally, concrete and masonry walls infilled between the columns can bear loads. These walls are finished with stucco on the interior and stone on the exterior.[7,8,16]

This combination of steel, concrete, and wood was common in mid-twentieth-century construction as it balanced structural strength, cost efficiency, and ease of assembly. The use of steel in construction dates to the late 19th century and was initially applied in bridge construction. As steel gained prominence in construction, traditional load-bearing masonry walls became unnecessary, prompting a redesign of the building envelope. Masonry cladding was employed to mimic the aesthetic quality of the traditional material while reducing the load on exterior walls and allowing for increased floor space within the building[17].

The use of steel and concrete was common for larger institutional buildings like schools or churches since the mid-twentieth century.

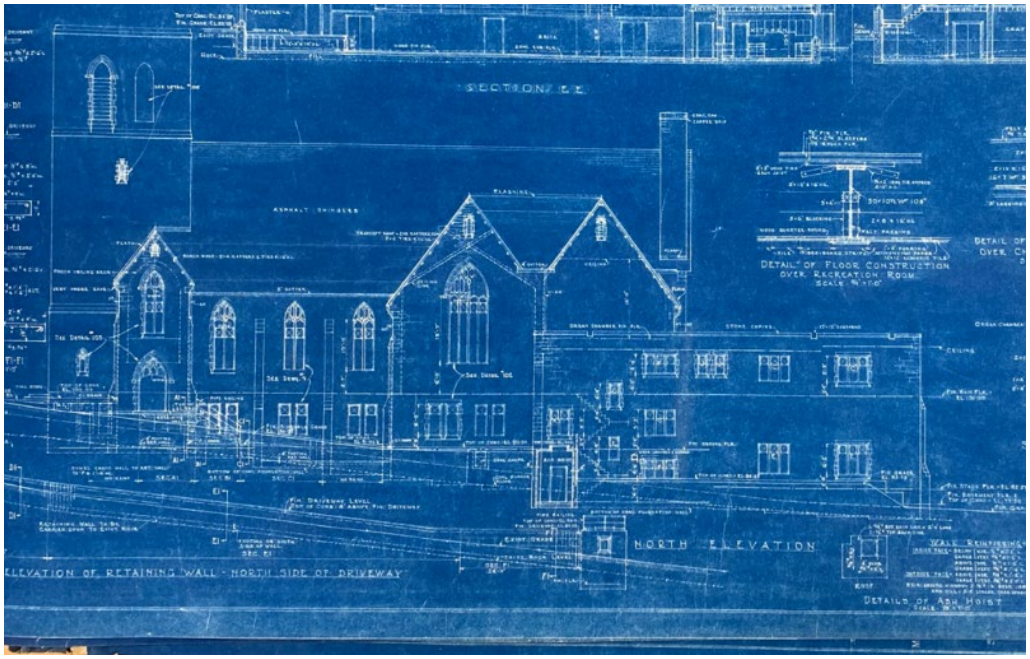

Figure 16: North elevation drawing, Bruce Brown & Brisley, 1948-1949[7]

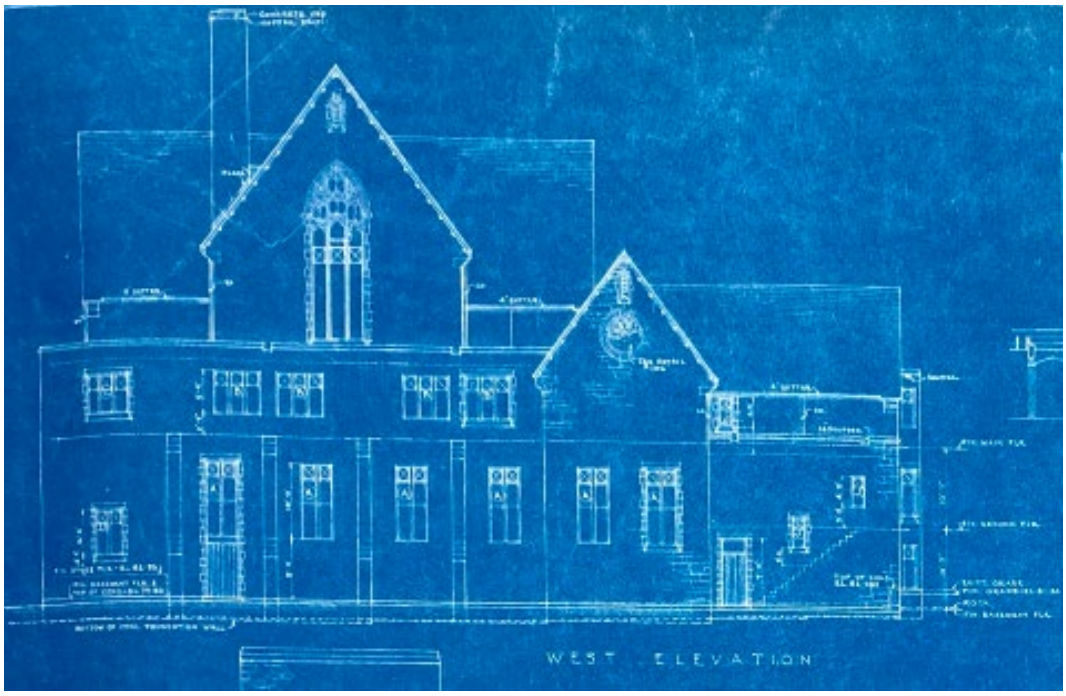

Figure 17: West elevation drawing, Bruce Brown & Brisley, 1948-1949[7]

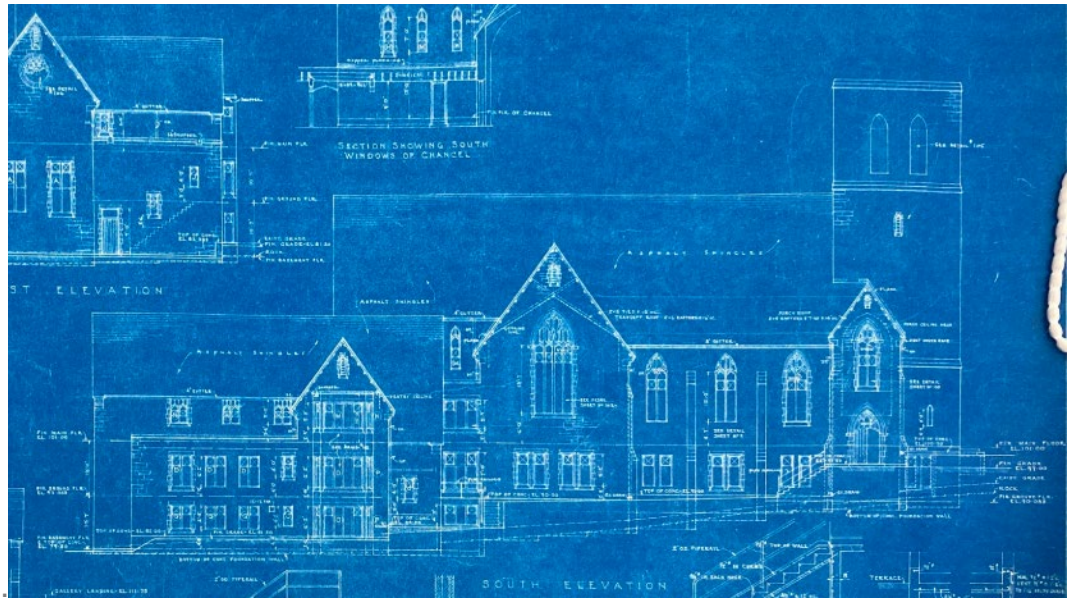

Figure 18: South Elevation, Bruce Brown & Brisley, 1948-1949[7]

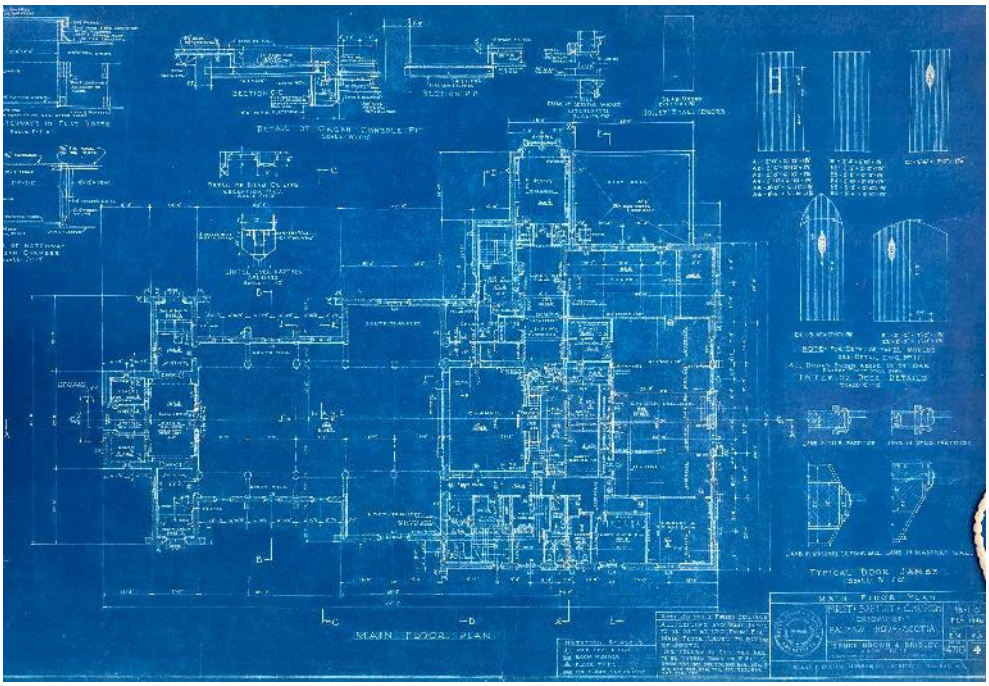

Figure 19: Main Floor Plan of First Baptist Church, Bruce Brown & Brisley, 1948-1949[7]

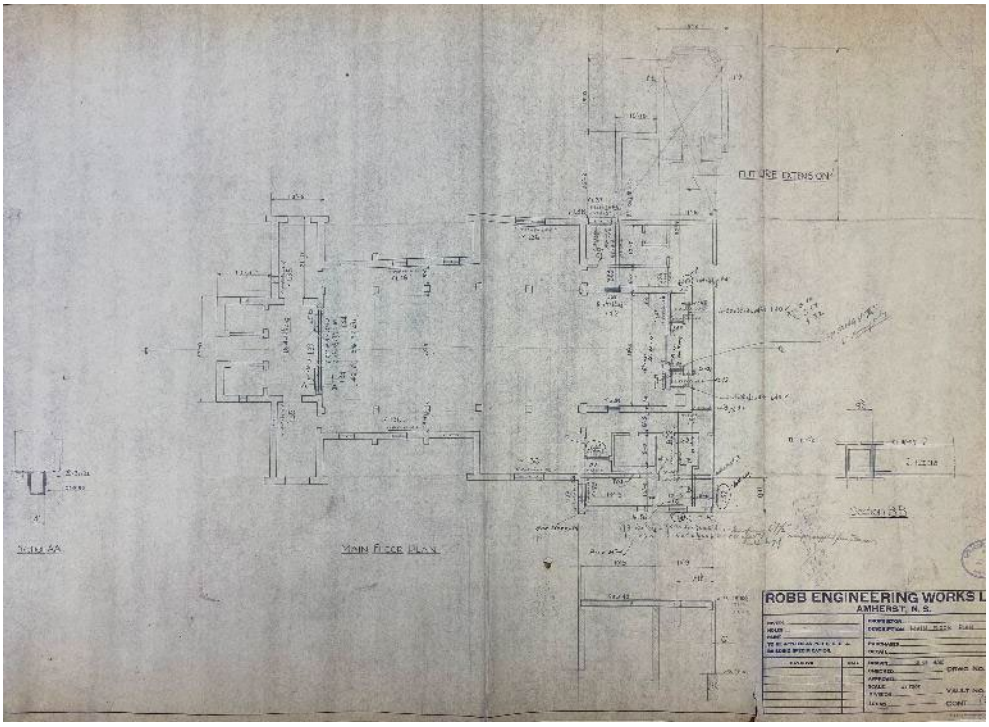

Figure 20: Main floor construction plan, showing the rear wing is removed from the construction plan, 1948[16]

Style

The institutional building at 1300 Oxford Street was constructed in the Neo-Gothic style (see Important / Unique Architectural Style or Highly Representative of an Era).[6]

The character defining elements of 1300 Oxford Street include, but are not limited to:

- Square tower with:
  - twin Gothic louvres framed with sandstone on the top level;
  - large Gothic window framed with tracery sandstone on the middle level; and
  - Gothic entranceway framed with sandstone and transom with tracery, above a large door;
- The church hall with stone cladding, sandstone surrounding fenestration and a large gable roof;
- The rear wing with stone cladding, sandstone surrounding fenestration, and a gabled hall;
- Cross gables with entranceways near the front of the building and larger cross gables near the middle of the building;
- Gothic windows with tracery framed with sandstone on the upper level and paired vertical windows on the lower level;
- The stained glass memorial windows and liturgical windows;
- Wood exterior doors with stone surroundings and wrought iron hinges;
- Stone and sandstone buttresses;
- Rough-cut stone cladding;
- Copper downspouts; and
- Granite pavers leading to the main entrance.

Figure 21: South and east elevations (July 17, 2024)

Figure 22: East elevation (July 17, 2024)

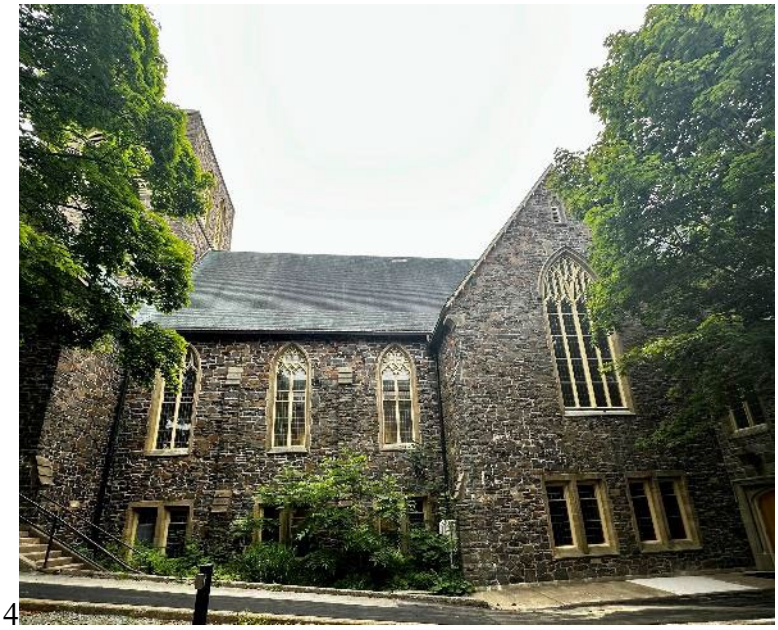

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Figure 23: North elevation of original portion (July 17, 2024)

Figure 24: West elevation (Christian Education Wing addition. July 17, 2024)

Figure 25: Gable with an entry door and Gothic window (July 17, 2024)

Figure 26: Detail of a stone buttress and copper downspouts (July 17, 2024)

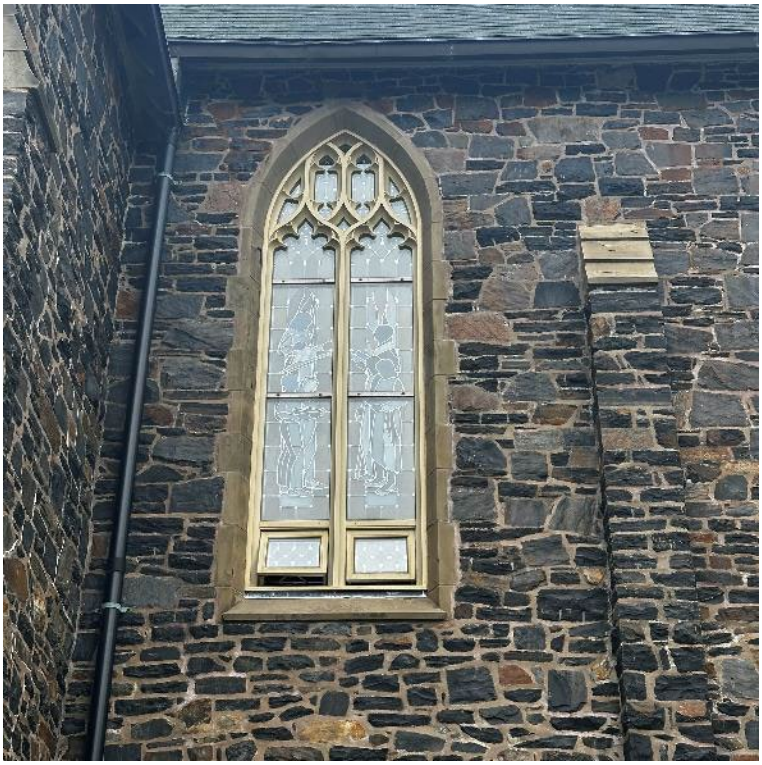

Figure 27: A liturgical window with stained glass and tracery (July 17, 2024)

Architectural Integrity

The architectural integrity of the subject building remains notably high in terms of character defining elements and no significant alterations are evident. The church building maintains most Neo-Gothic building features, such as stone and sandstone buttresses, stained-glass windows with pointed arch stone surrounding, and stone cladding.

The Christian Education Wing addition was constructed in 1958 and is connected to the rear of the original church. The three-storey addition has a flat roof and is slightly lower in height than the gable roof of the church. The exterior material used in the addition closely matches the texture and colour of the original church structure, helping maintain a degree of visual harmony between the two sections. For example, the exterior wall adopted rough-cut stone cladding matching the wall of the original building. The windows' surroundings are also made of sandstone as the original windows but in a more austere form with fewer gothic elements.

A substantial rear wing was included in the original architectural design that was never built. In 1957, the church hired the original architect firm, Bruce Brown & Brisley, to adjust their rear wing design. Compared with these drawings, the Christian Education Wing respected the initial design's layout, massing and style. The wing in the 1948 drawings is a rectangular structure with a flat roof, topped by an L-shaped hall featuring a crossed gable roof on its south end (Figure 16 and Figure 19). The current Christian Education Wing retains the overall rectangular shape but simplifies the L-shaped hall into an I-shaped hall with a gable roof. While the locations and number of windows have been adjusted, their design remains faithful to the original concept. The Christian Education Wing respects the church's original architectural design and can be considered a character-defining element.

Relationship to Surrounding Area

The subject building is located on the west side of Oxford Street, neighbouring a two-storey parsonage on the south parcel. The surrounding area is predominately mid-rise residential buildings with a blend of institutional structures closer to the Dalhousie University campus across the street. The railway crossing to the west separates the subject building from a low-density neighbourhood.

The massing and scale of the subject building are modest yet distinguishable within the residential and university context. The church's scale is smaller than the large university buildings but larger than individual residential homes, making it a transitional structure between the two in terms of scale. The roofline of the church and the height of the tower breaks up the western skyline of Oxford Street and introduces a variation in form. The church's stone exterior contrasts with the neighbouring residential buildings while complementing the stone facades of structures on the Dalhousie University campus. In conclusion, the subject building serves as a transitional architectural element within its environment, harmonizing with both residential and institutional surroundings.

Figure 28: The subject building denoted by a red arrow and the surrounding area, 2024

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