

**231 Bay Street North, Hamilton (Hamilton Bridge Works Company Office)**  
Constructed circa 1911



**Preliminary Evaluation of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest:**

(In accordance with Ontario Regulation 9/06, as amended by Ontario Regulation 569/22)

**Design or Physical Value**

1. The three-storey brick structure at 231 Bay Street North, Hamilton was constructed in 1911. It has design value as a representative example of an industrial office building influenced by the Edwardian Classicism style of architecture. Features typical of the style include its: square plan; brick facades with stone detailing; low hip roof with deep projecting eaves and a heavy ornate cornice with paired copper brackets; rusticated façade in the lower level; decorative brickwork including pilasters, paneling below the frieze, dentiled brick courses and panels between the storeys; segmentally-arched window openings in the upper storey with exaggerated voussoirs and keystones and stone lug sills; paired flat-headed windows in the main storey with transoms and shared stone lintels and sills; main entrance with a decorative stone surround with oversized voussoirs and keystones under cornice supported by scrolled brackets and fluted

pilasters; and, decorative brick panels between first and second stories with geometric design.

The construction of the building into the topography of the site is also unique, with a two-storey façade fronting onto Bay Street with the principal entrance and dropping down as you travel west on Barton Street to reveal a partially exposed basement storey for a total of 3 full storeys on the north elevation.

2. This property displays a high degree of craftsmanship, as demonstrated by its: shaped copper cornice with ornate paired copper brackets; decorative brickwork including panels, banding, dentils, and geometric designs; stone surround of the main entrance with cornice supported by scrolled brackets on fluted pilasters with oversized voussoirs and keystone and, rusticated stone façade in lower level.
3. The property does not appear to demonstrate a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.

#### Historical or Associative Value

4. This property has historical value due to its association with prominent local business, the Hamilton Bridge Works Company, its founder, William Hendrie, and the Gallery on the Bay art gallery. The Hamilton Bridge Works, founded in 1872 by prominent Hamilton businessman William Hendrie (1831-1906), initially produced machine tools but found success after switching to the design, fabrication and construction of structural steel bridges, buildings, cranes, and other structures. The Bridge Works undertook multiple expansions of their plant as their business increased, the construction of the subject property being part of an expansion program that saw the growth of the west end plant and the construction of the east end plant on Sherman Avenue. The Bridge Works would remain in the hands of the Hendrie family for three generations, passing to William's son Sir John Strathearn Hendrie (1857-1923) and to his grandson Major William Ian Hendrie (1890-1975) before being sold to the Bridge and Tank Company of Canada after the Second World War. The Bridge and Tank Company ceased operations in 1984, though the subject property was sold by the company in 1962. Between 1996 and 2021, this property was home to the Gallery on the Bay a local art gallery that was part of Hamilton's art scene for many years. The site of art exhibits, book launches, plays and other events, this property is well known to Hamiltonians.
5. The property does not yield or have the potential to yield information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.
6. The property demonstrates the work and ideas of the Hamilton architectural team of Mills and Hutton. Charles Mills (1860-1934) was a prominent Hamilton architect who practiced between 1890 and 1914. Some of Mill's surviving designs include Oak Hall at 10-12 James Street North, the large house of George W.

Robinson at 2 Ravenscliffe Avenue, and the Landed Bank Building at 47 James Street South.

Like Mills, Gordon Hutton (1881-1942) had been born in Hamilton. After training in Chicago with American architectural firm Adler & Sullivan, Mills hired Hutton as an assistant in 1905, making him full partner in 1908. This partnership lasted until 1914, when Mills retired from architectural practice. Besides the subject property, this partnership designed a number of institutional, commercial, and residential properties, of which the homes at 10 Turner Avenue and 280 Aberdeen Avenue are surviving examples. After Charles Mills retirement, Hutton partnered with W. R. Souter (1893-1971), who had been a junior architect under the previous partnership. Hutton went on to design Memorial Public School in 1919, and, with Souter, designed prominent Hamilton landmarks including the Otis-Fensom Elevator Company office at 440 Victoria Avenue North, the Delta Secondary School, 358 Bay Street South for Joseph M. Piggot, and the Basilica of Christ the King.

#### Contextual Value

7. The property is important in defining the historic working class, mixed-use nature of the Central Neighbourhood of Hamilton. The property, part of a former industrial site, is surrounded by what would have originally been worker's housing. This is one of several examples in this neighbourhood of how late-nineteenth century and early-twentieth century industrial development occurred cheek-by-jowl to housing.
8. The property is historically, visually, functionally, and physically linked to the surrounding area. Built into the topography of its original location and surrounded by the dwellings that would house its workforce, this property, as well as the neighbouring buildings at 125 Barton Street West, were part of the Hamilton Bridge Works complex which spanned both sides of Barton Street West between Bay and Hess Street.
9. This property is considered to be a local landmark. A large, ornate, and distinctive structure situated at the top of an incline on a corner lot, the subject property dominates the intersection of Barton Street West and Bay Street North.

**Sources:**

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