

4100 Sainte-Catherine Street West

Category: 1



North (Front) Façade



Front Façade: Details of the Cast Stonework, Featuring Art-deco Geometric Patterns



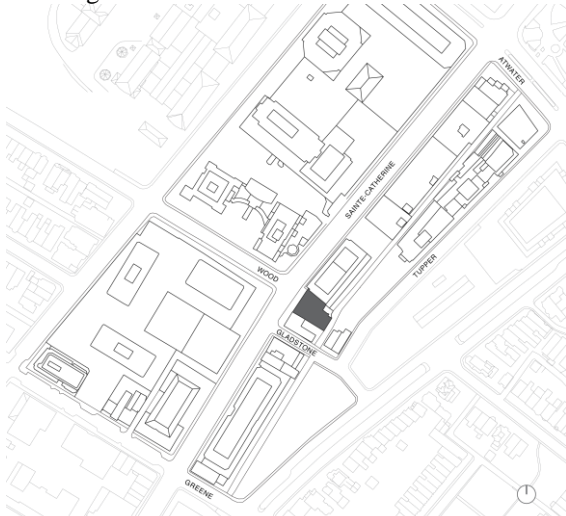
Front Façade: Details of the Spandrel Panels



Front Façade: Details of the Cast Stonework on the Building Base



South (Rear) Façade



Key Plan

<p>Description</p>	<p>This is a four-storey, plus basement, commercial building, designed in the art-deco style. Completed in 1931, to the designs of Joseph-Elgide-Césaire Daoust, (1881-1946), the building was purpose-built to house the garage of J.E. Blais. According to a 1961 insurance map, it was known for a time as the Warwick Building, but this name is now attached to an apartment building at 331 Clarke Avenue, Westmount. The front façade is comprised of a combination of finely cast concrete and brick. (It appears that the storefronts originally contained black Carrerra glass, but this period material is gone.)</p> <p>Joseph-Elgide-Césaire Daoust graduated from McGill in 1903, seven years after the foundation of the School of Architecture. After his studies, he partnered with Louis Z. Gauthier and received a number of commissions from the Roman Catholic dioceses in Quebec for both church and educational buildings. Their joint practise ended in 1920, but J.E.C. Daoust continued to work on similar commissions all over Quebec. The building at 4100 Saint-Catherine Street differs from the rest of the portfolio of this architect, both in typology and in style.</p> <p>After the first World War, during the 1920s, car ownership was increasing in popularity. The automobile industry grew as the demand for cars increased. By 1931, when the building was erected, there was over a million cars in Canada. The 1930s were the years of the Great Depression, but nonetheless approximately 760 000 cars were sold during this decade in Canada. The building stands as a symbol of this trend that completely transformed Canadian cities.</p> <p>Several other garages and motors companies chose to locate on Sainte-Catherine Street during the same years. The Packard Building, at 4026-32 Sainte-Catherine Street, has a more imposing length, but lacks the height of the Blais Building, which was designed with multiple office floors above the garage.</p>
<p>Heritage Values</p>	<p>Historical Values: 4100 Ste-Catherine Street is linked to the development of the automobile industry, and the commercialization of Ste-Catherine Street in the 1920s.</p> <p>Architectural Values: 4100Ste-Catherine Street is notable for its art-deco façade, with cast-stone detailing.</p> <p>Environmental Values: The siting of 4100 Ste-Catherine Street speaks to its commercial vocation, and contributes to the streetscape.</p>
<p>Heritage Character Defining Elements</p>	<p>The key elements which contribute to the heritage character of this site are as follows:</p> <p><u>Setting:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building facing Sainte-Catherine Street with no setbacks, indicative of its commercial character; - Hierarchy of the facades: only the front façade facing Sainte-Catherine Street is articulated. <p><u>Exterior:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tripartite composition and symmetry of the front façade - Verticality expressed by the brick arrangement on the front façade, - Use of grey cast concrete stonework to define the base of the building and decorative elements within the brickwork. The geometric patterning is typical of the art-deco style

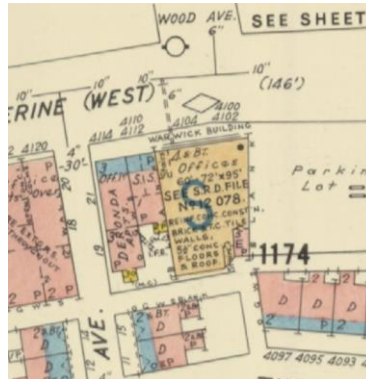
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Window arrangement: large shop fronts and smaller upper window openings. - Metal spandrel panels with cast geometric patterns
Date of Construction	1931
Persons of Significance	Architect: Joseph-Elgide-Césaire Daoust (1881-1946) Original owner: J.E. Blais
Stylistic Influences	Art Deco
Building	
<i>Number of stories</i>	4 + basement
<i>Plan/Footprint</i>	Truncated rectangle (23 meters wide x 30 meters long)
<i>Height</i>	15 meters
Architectural Elements	
<i>Foundations</i>	Concrete
<i>Walls</i>	The front north façade is articulated. The south façade is secondary. The east and west facades are party walls. Front façade: -One-storey base: clad in grey cast stone, some featuring geometric patterns -Three upper storeys: Yellow brick with cast stone insertions Rear façade: -Clad in non-load bearing red clay brick (stretchers only)
<i>Roof</i>	Flat roof, covered with tar and gravel
<i>Windows</i>	Ground floor: Large shopfronts Upper floors: Combination of awning and fixed sash (non-original). The original windows appear to have been industrial sash, designed with a large central pane, surrounded by smaller squares. Divided into three parts, the window mullions would have related to the tripartite divisions still present in the spandrel panels.
<i>Others (entrance, porch, chimneys...)</i>	Painted spandrel panels: probably cast steel
<i>Construction Methods</i>	Concrete structure with brick and cast concrete infill, terracotta backing Steel structure supporting the roof
Composition	The front façade of the building is divided in three parts. The central bays contain the principal entrance into the building. The ends are emphasized by shallow projecting corner elements, which emphasize the termination of the building. The building has a strong horizontality at the base, created by the cast stone frame, which extends across the entire ground floor. Above this, the brickwork is arranged to emphasize the verticality of the upper floors. The parapet is marked by cast stone panels and decorative elements, which provide a visual termination to the façade.
Context (setbacks, surroundings, landscape, landmark status)	No setbacks. The building is in line with the sidewalk of Sainte-Catherine. The façade is in continuity with the facades of the buildings on both sides. The back of the building faces a lane.

Additions/Alterations	<p>1954: Transformation of one commercial space into Restaurant Spiro by Ameublement de Magasins A. Desroches</p> <p>1981: Renovations: ground floor and exterior front façade by Peter Rose Architects</p> <p>1988: Renovations by Shapiro and Wolfe Architects</p> <p>1989: Transformation of a commercial space into a Ben and Jerry's by Conrath Scheffer Architectes</p>
Integrity	<p>Front Façade: High: The front façade building is still very close to its original appearance. Some character defining elements have been removed and replaced by elements of lesser value (Carrera glass, original windows).</p>

Historical Images



Photograph of the front façade
1985
Source: Westmount City Hall



Insurance plan
1961
Source: BANQ

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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