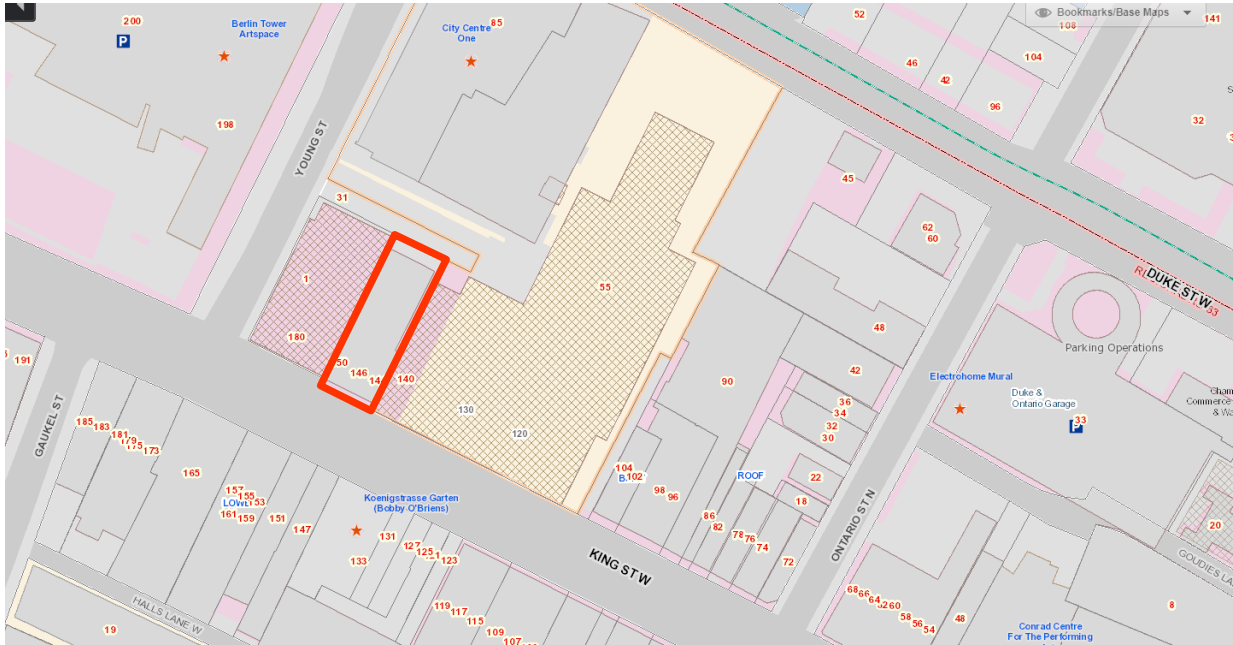


# STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

## 144-150 KING STREET WEST



### Summary of Significance

☒ Design/Physical Value

☒ Historical Value

☒ Contextual Value

☐ Social Value

☐ Economic Value

☐ Environmental Value

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**Municipal Address:** 144-150 King Street West

**Legal Description:** Plan 362 Lot 4 & 5 Pt Lot 3

**Year Built:** 1895

**Architectural Style:** Classical Revival

**Original Owner:** -

**Original Use:** Commercial and Office Building

**Condition:** Good

### Description of Cultural Heritage Resource

144-150 King Street West is a four-storey late 19<sup>th</sup> century cast concrete commercial building built in the Classical Revival architectural style. The building is situated on 0.15 acre parcel of land located on the north side of King Street West between Young Street and Ontario Street in the City Commercial Core of the City of Kitchener in the Region of Waterloo. The principal resource that contributes to the heritage value is the four-storey commercial building.

## **Heritage Value**

144-150 King Street is recognized for its design/physical, historical/associative, and contextual values.

### **Design/Physical Value**

The design and physical value of the building resides in its architecture and physical construction. The building is a representative example of the Classical Revival architectural style in a commercial building. The structure is four-storeys in height. Renovations to the front were completed in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, which included covering the original pre-cast concrete cladding with a different cladding. Though some original detailing was lost, the work largely maintained the original appearance of the structure.

#### **Front (South) Façade**

The building fronts onto King Street West. The front façade is divided vertically by five piers, three storeys in height, creating four bays. Each bay contains a single-hung window on every storey except the ground floor. The structure is divided horizontally by a corbel table above the first storey, with a second corbel table sitting above the fourth storey and below the parapet. Crenels are cut into the parapet, giving the roofline a unique and distinct shape. The parapet also contains an inscription that reads “Weber Chambers”, which gives the structure its name.

#### **West (Side) Façade**

The west side façade directly abuts the adjacent building and is not visible.

#### **East (Side) Façade**

Due to the proximity of the adjacent building, only a portion of the east side façade is visible. The east side façade is composed of buff brick. There are three windows with stone sills and lintels along each storey except the first floor. A fourth window opening along each storey appears to have been closed up. There are two exposed ducting systems that are visible on this façade.

#### **Rear (North) Façade**

The rear façade is comprised of buff brick. Each floor contains a symmetrical fenestration pattern and can broadly be classified into two styles. Towards the left portion of the façade, each storey has two windows with upper and lower sashes. The upper sashes are fixed, and the lower sashes can be opened or have an air conditioning unit installed. Towards the right portion of the façade, each storey has a window with a single upper sash and portions of the lower sash that can be opened. Next to the windows is a recessed door entry with side transoms. These doors and windows have a fire escape staircase.

All doors and windows have concrete lintels and sills. The second to fourth storeys contain three casement or single-hung windows with stone sills and concrete headers, as well as a door and door opening on the west side, with a flanking window. Each door opening also has a stone header, and the openings lead to a fire escape. It appears that five different openings on the ground floor have been closed, as the bricks are different colors, do not seem as weathered, and stone headers remain.

The building also demonstrates a high degree of technical and scientific achievement. The King Street West façade is likely the first in the City to be built with a precast concrete façade. The current façade is clad with an exterior insulation and finishing system (EIFS) similar to stucco; however, the original precast concrete façade still exists behind the new cladding. In addition, it is believed that this building was the first building within the City to install an elevator.

### **Historical/Associative Value**

The subject property has historical and associative value due to its connection to the theme of economic development in the downtown area.

In 1840 David Weber sold a one-acre parcel of land north of King Street and east of Young Street, all within Lot 16 and part of the 3-acre trade made by his father-in-law in 1833 to Frederick Gaukel. This parcel became the site of the Mayfair Hotel and the Weber Chambers, which is the inscription seen on the parapet of 144-150 King Street West. The Weber Chambers building originally housed storefronts on the ground floor and office spaces above. Notable tenants of the property have included: London Life Conservatory of Music (1912); Met Life Insurance Co. (1912); Wm. Cairnes, Real Estate (1912); H.L. Staebler Co. Ltd., Insurance (1924 and 1933); Salts and Chemicals, Ltd. (1924); Bricker & Sons, Ltd., Wholesale Jeweler (1924); R.W. Ripley, Dental Laboratory (1933); and, G.E. Schlee, Advertising (1933). The site was the long-time home to the Palladium Restaurant, whose "Candy, Ice Cream, Palladium Restaurant" sign was easily recognizable by locals at the time, and which served downtown Kitchener well into the 1980's. Also operating for many years under the Palladium was William G. Sahli, a watchmaker-jeweler. William G. Sahli's career spanned 68 years, concluding with his retirement in 1978 at the age of 83. He had serviced three generations of the same family and other locals within the area, and, like the Palladium Restaurant, became a staple of the Kitchener downtown. In 1985 the second to fourth storey office spaces were converted to residential uses, but the ground floor retains its commercial uses.

### **Contextual Value**

The contextual value of the building relates to its importance in maintaining the commercial character of the surrounding area, as well as its physical, functional, visual, and historical link to its surroundings. The subject property is located within the Downtown Cultural Heritage Landscape, which is within the City Centre District and is an area that has historically been recognized as the heart of the downtown and a focal point of the Region. The area is occupied by a mix of uses, with hotels, banks, and other commercial enterprises being the original anchors of the commercial core. Though the upper storeys are now residential units, the ground floor maintains its original commercial use and continues to support the commercial character of the area. In addition, while this area has continued to evolve, many of the late-19<sup>th</sup> century and early-20<sup>th</sup> century commercial structures like 144-150 Weber Street remain today and further contribute to the character of the area.

### **Heritage Attributes**

The heritage value of 144-150 King Street West resides in the following heritage attributes:

- All elements related to the construction and Classical Revival architectural style, including:
  - Rectangular plan;
  - Yellow buff brick on the side and rear elevations;
  - Roof and rooflines;
  - Window openings;
  - Stone lintels and sills;
  - Door openings;
  - EIFS (Stucco) façade;
  - Tall three-storey piers;
  - Storefronts with plate glass windows and doors;
  - Corbel table above the storefront and below the roofline;
  - Crenellated parapet; and
  - Inscription on parapet reading "Weber Chambers."

## Photographs



144-150 King Street West - Front Elevation (South Façade)





144-150 King Street West - Rear Elevation (North Façade)



144-150 King Street West - Side Elevation (East Façade)



The Weber Chambers, photo c. 1958, photographer unknown





The Mayfair Hotel and the Weber Chambers, c. 1927, by Ernest Denton