

94-66

Cornwall, Ontario
Inverarden House
Montreal Road

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

Inverarden House was built in 1816 by John McDonald, a retired partner of the North West Company. The house remained in the McDonald family until 1965, when it was purchased by Chemcell Ltd., and was subsequently declared a National Historic site by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada in 1968. Inverarden was acquired by the Government of Canada in 1973 and restored to its current condition in 1979. The house has had many alterations, most notably the additions of the east and west wings (1 821-22) and several interior modifications. Parks Canada is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 94-66.

Reasons for Designation

Inverarden was designated Classified for the quality and integrity of its environment, for its important historical associations and for its architectural design and craftsmanship.

Inverarden House is a superior example of an early 19th Century picturesque country estate. Despite some alterations, the crucial interaction between the house and the landscape which defined such buildings, has not been adversely affected.

The building and its setting hold strong thematic links to the re-creation of the genteel lifestyle by middle and upper-middle class British immigrants of the 19th Century. It also reflects the number of retired North West Company officials such as Simon Fraser and David Thompson, who settled in the eastern districts of Upper Canada. By virtue of his status as land owner, employer and Justice of the Peace, John McDonald became important in the community, and his home reflected that prominence.

The facades symmetrical arrangement of casement windows on either side of the classically inspired doorway, accentuates the simple form of the structure. This simplicity of design, along with the subtle colouring of the roughcast stucco walls, linked the building with its picturesque setting.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage value of Inverarden House resides in the strong relationship between the house and its picturesque setting. The slightly withdrawn wooded setting above the St. Lawrence River, typifies the picturesque villas of the 19th Century favoured by wealthy British immigrants. The considered management of the grounds to protect the views of, and from, the house should be ensured as part of the site administration.

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Inverarden House (Continued)

The architectural importance of the house itself lies in its formal symmetry and classically derived detailing. The decorative cornice at the roof line, as well as the detailed woodwork of the front entrance with its sidelights and fan, should all be maintained or replaced in-kind, only if absolutely necessary. The placement of the multi-paned casement windows was an important design element of picturesque villas, as the windows afforded carefully planned views. The maintenance of these windows on both the main and basement levels, should also be assured. Should the replacement of any window become necessary, the earlier sash should be preserved as historic evidence.

Any alterations to the house or landscaping that take away from the symmetry of the facade or the visual texture of the walls or roofing, should be avoided.

The interior woodwork evident in the original doors, baseboards and mantel pieces is of excellent quality as befitted a gentleman of McDonalds status. Of equal quality are the plaster ceiling rosettes and masonry cooking fire places. Though some materials have been replaced during the buildings restoration, the preservation of these interior finishes should be assured.

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For further guidance, please refer to the *FHBRO Code of Practice*.