

# FHBRO HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

## BUILDING #O-102 (ADMINISTRATION), CFB BORDEN

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FHBRO number: **94-088**  
DFRP number: **11022**  
Resource name: **Headquarters Building, Building O-102**  
Address: **CFB Borden, Ontario**  
FHBRO status: **“Recognized” Federal Heritage Building**  
Construction: **1948**  
Designer: **Department of National Defence, Canada (no individual identified)**  
Original function: **Administrative offices**  
Current function: **Administrative offices**  
Modifications: **Minor cladding, window, and interior adjustments**  
Custodian: **Department of National Defence**

### Reasons for Designation

Building O-102, Headquarters Building, CFB Borden, is a “Recognized” Federal Heritage Building because of its historical associations, and its architectural and environmental values.

#### Historical value:

Constructed in 1948 to plans prepared in 1945, building O-102 is associated with the massive construction and modernization program undertaken by the Department of National Defence at the end of WWII. The two primary themes for this association are (1) the creation of permanent peacetime armed forces, and (2) the expansion and transformation of the military services to meet specific national commitments in the early years of the Cold War. Part of a series of new structures along the western edge of the main portion of what was Camp Borden, the Headquarters Building was a forerunner of the postwar consolidation and expansion of the base to accommodate a wide variety of new functions. Unlike many major structures of the postwar era designed by private architects, this project was developed by DND staff as an exemplar for the new standards of improved accommodation that followed WWII.

#### Architectural value:

Building O-102 is a two-storey, stucco-clad concrete structure with flat roofs and slightly projecting eaves, whose linear plan is slightly expanded at its midsection. The soffits of the originally slim eave projections on all elevations have been enclosed in sheet metal, thickening the visual effect at the roof line. Centered in the long front elevation is a partly asymmetrical projecting two-storey bay, with a stair tower set to the left side slightly above the main roof level and recessed in plan. A central single-storey projection comprising the secondary building entrance extends to the rear. The overall effect of massing and elevation treatments emphasizes horizontality, while the main entrance offers a deliberate vertical contrast.

The elevations comprise rows of primarily individual vertical windows, framed by slightly projecting concrete bands that connect sills and lintels into a continuous horizontal frame and wrap around at each corner to the first window of the end elevation on each storey. Most windows, whose widths are generally equal to their spacing, are double-hung units of conventionally vertical proportion, though with panes bisected horizontally to add to the overall horizontal effect. A smaller version of this wrap-around visual frame, around a more tightly spaced row of windows, is asymmetrically applied to the single-storey rear entrance block. The front face of the main entrance is dominated by an off-centre row of five narrow two-storey strips of glazing augmented by sheet-metal spandrel panels, separated by thick mullions up to the eaves. The entrance doors, in the two left-most bays, are approached up a short flight of steps open to

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three sides. The original glazing pattern, of six horizontal panes on each floor, has been altered. A similar vertical strip of glazing and metal panel, also modified, is off-centre in the front elevation of the stair tower to the left of the main entrance. The interior plan comprises a double-loaded corridor with offices and service rooms on each side. Interior spaces have been modified over time, but the stairs and hallways retain wood and terrazzo details from the original state of the building.

The overall effect is of a contemporary industrial office block in a hybrid style of asymmetrical modernist formalism and Prairie-style proportions. While the building shares aspects of its architectural character with nearby buildings of the early 1950s, in the Cold-War period of base's expansion, the exterior architecture and siting of the Headquarters Building give it a distinctive presence in the base environment.

### Environmental value:

The Headquarters Building sits atop a small rise overlooking the intersection of El Alamein and Cambrai roads, oriented diagonally to general planning grid of this part of the base. The landscape frontage toward the roads is terraced, with two flights of concrete-paved stairs and a third flight of shallow steps to the entrance from a circular drive below. Planting beds on the terrace slopes and ornamental shrubs along the stairs augment the cropped lawns surrounding the main and side elevations. There are small stands of mature conifers around the building and the whole is screened from the intersection by a cluster of mature deciduous trees. The landscape to the rear comprises paved parking areas and service access. The overall orientation and landscape contrasts with the rectilinearity and symmetry of much of the rest of the base plan, and thereby both relieves and calls attention to that formal order.

### **Character-Defining Elements**

The following character-defining elements of Building O-102 should be respected:

Its role as an illustration of the expansion, modernization and diversification of the Canadian military in peacetime as reflected in:

- its exemplary role for new standards of military accommodation of its period;
- its high standard of robust, durable construction; and
- the formal and functional relationship of building elevations to internal arrangements

Its combination of architectural modernism and functionalism in a durable and economical form as manifested in:

- the generally symmetrical plan and overall horizontally-emphasized massing of the building, reinforced by the wrap-around continuity of the window surrounds;
- the asymmetries and vertical contrasts of the projecting entrance pavilions and the stair tower;
- the hybrid modernistic style, a distinctive combination of aspects of asymmetrical formalism and detailing with Prairie-style massing and proportions.

The manner in which it reinforces the planned character of the setting as evidenced in:

- its elevated siting, freestanding diagonal orientation, and park-like landscape frontage; and
- its contrast of orientation and landscape to the adjacent building groups of the base plan.

For guidance on interventions, please refer to the *FHBRO Code of Practice*. For further information contact FHBRO.

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