

94-1 06

Trenton, Ontario

Officers Mess (Building 38)

CFB Trenton

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Officers Mess was constructed on Canadian Forces Base Trenton in 1936, under the provisions of the Public Works Construction Act (1934), unemployment Relief Project #28. It was designed and erected by the Directorate of Engineer Services of the Royal Canadian Air Force, and has had few external alterations. The Department of National Defense is custodian. See FHBRO Report 94-1 06.

Reasons for Designation

The Officers Mess was designated Recognized because of its important environmental setting, its significant historical associations and its architectural design integrity.

The Officers Mess is an important component of the grouping of pre-World War II buildings at CFB Trenton which also includes the Administration Building (1933-34), four barrack blocks (1 932-27) and the Junior Ranks Mess (1938). These buildings reflect the functional design and construction methods favoured by the R.C.A.F. during that period. They stand as testimony to the central role that CFB Trenton has played in the Air Forces history as the central training base for the Allies during the Second World War, and as the transportation link to the theatres of action for all conflicts from the Korean War to the Persian Gulf War. It continues to serve this transportation function for United Nations peacekeeping operations and humanitarian relief efforts.

The social role of the Officers Mess has given the building a special significance for the officer class, for many of whom the building embodies the esprit de corps of a squadron and of the R.C.A.F. as a whole. The Mess has also served an important function in linking the base with the local community, as civilians have been able to become members since 1946.

Like the adjacent Administration building, the Officers' Mess demonstrates a simplicity of design and a minimal use of ornamentation on the main facade and projecting wings. Unlike many of the later buildings on the base, the Officers Mess was built using steel and concrete construction methods, yet, due to its particular social function, the building has more elaborate interior finishes in the public areas. The Art Deco- inspired stairwell and extensive wood paneling in the dining rooms are of note for their high degree of craftsmanship.

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Character Defining Elements

The Heritage Character of the Officers Mess derives from its prominent location and its architectural association to the neighbouring buildings. The Mess is adjacent to the Administration Building, the parade ground and the bases formal gardens and is therefore a centrally located and recognizable landmark on the base. Any future developments or landscaping changes should respect this relationship between the structures.

The white stucco finish of the exterior walls and the strong horizontal emphasis created by the belt coursing and the flat roof accentuate the simple symmetry of the buildings facade. The regular pattern of window openings and simple glazing also contribute to the modern appearance of the Mess, and should not be altered.

The projecting entry displays a small amount of traditional ornamentation, such as the crest and lettering above the doors. Alterations to the building that might take away from the facades symmetry should be avoided.

The building meets its functional requirements well, accommodating very large numbers in its dining rooms and providing recreational facilities for officers. The interior plan of the building has changed little, reflecting the quality of the original design. The interior finishes display a high degree of craftsmanship, particularly the wood paneling of the main rooms, and the Art Deco-inspired stairwell and stained glass of the entry. The proper maintenance of these finishes should be assured.

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