

**FHBRO HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT
COMMANDER'S RESIDENCE
205 DROMORE AVENUE, WINNIPEG, MANITOBA**

FHBRO Number: **07-074**
DFRP Number: **12558**
Resource Name: **Commander's Residence**
Address: **205 Dromore Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba**
FHBRO Status: **"Recognized" Federal Heritage Building**
Construction: **1912**
Designer: **C.S. Bridgman**
Original Function: **Private residence**
Current Function: **Residence for Base Commander of CFB Winnipeg**
Modifications: **Upgrades to finishes in kitchen and bathrooms (c. 1970), and electrical/
heating systems; mudroom addition to rear**
Custodian: **Department of National Defence**

Description of Historic Place

The Commander's Residence is a rectangular, two-and-a-half storey red brick structure with a two-storey sunroom wing to the west, and double garage, balcony and small mudroom at the rear. Its exterior is characterized by a nearly symmetrical front façade, evenly spaced openings and gently sloped, hipped roofs with dormers and gable ends. Designed by Charles S. Bridgman as a private residence, the building was donated to the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1940 and has served as the residence of many distinguished senior military officers. Surrounded by simple lawns and informal landscaping, the building sits on a flat corner lot within the well-to-do suburb of Crescentwood, Winnipeg.

Heritage Value

The Commander's Residence is a "Recognized" Federal Heritage Building because of its historical associations, and its architectural and environmental values.

Historical value:

The Commander's Residence exemplifies early 20th century suburban development in Canada. It is associated with the concept of area specialization and the establishment of class-based residential communities outside of the city core. Through its dedication as a lasting memorial to the fallen son of its previous owner, William A. Murphy, the house also speaks to the country's history of personal acts of remembrance. The building is associated with its first two owners: Robert McKay, who had commissioned its construction, and William Murphy. Both men were prominent Winnipeg businessmen of regional importance. Built in 1912, the Commander's Residence marks a major turning point in the city's development at the outset of its suburbanization during an era of substantial growth. Set within one of the city's most prestigious neighbourhoods, it is representative of Winnipeg's prosperity at the time.

Architectural value:

The Commander's Residence is a good illustration of upper middle class suburban residential architecture of the early 20th century. The solid massing of its rectangular core is broken up by its adjoining wings, a

FEDERAL HERITAGE BUILDINGS REVIEW OFFICE
National Historic Sites Directorate, Parks Canada
25 Eddy Street, 5th Floor, Gatineau, QC K1A 0M5
Telephone: 819-997-6740 / Fax: 819-953-6146 / Web Site: www.parkscanada.gc.ca/federalhb

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simple wooden front porch and brick sillcourses above each floor. Like many contemporary single-family homes of similar scale and quality, the house is of conventional design with vaguely historicist detailing. However, there is an obvious and atypical plainness to the exterior. This trait is characteristic of Winnipeg architecture of the time and may be a design response to the strong Prairie light which casts pronounced shadows, creating an illusion of greater relief. The layout of the house is based on a standard, central hall floor plan typical of the period and provides a good response to the functional needs of its occupants. Generously sized rooms on the ground floor are practical in terms of both family living and accommodating small-scale entertaining. The house was built using standard construction methods and materials typical for its time. It is in excellent condition, attesting to the quality of materials used and competent workmanship.

Environmental value:

Situated within the prosperous suburb of Crescentwood, the Commander's Residence is set well back from the street and is surrounded by simple lawns, mature trees, overgrown hedges and foundation plantings. A single flagpole signals the semi-official function of the house and sets it apart from other single-family homes typical of the neighbourhood. Despite the introduction of the flagpole and a rear mudroom addition, the relationship between the house and its site has retained its original 1912 character. In terms of scale, height, quality of materials, and setback, the house is entirely representative of similar residences of the pre-World War One era, making it compatible with the present, harmonious character of the surrounding area. Unlike other military housing, the Commander's Residence is located off the base. Due to the status of its occupant, the building has a very high profile within the military community and is well known within Crescentwood and the official, business and social milieu of Winnipeg.

Character-Defining Elements

The character-defining elements of the Commander's Residence which should be respected include:

- Its handsome, conventional design, in terms of composition, layout and construction, which is typical of upper middle class suburban residential architecture of the pre-World War One era and seen in:
 - The solid massing of its rectangular, two-and-a-half storey core which is visually softened by adjoining wings, a simple open front porch and continuous brick sill courses;
 - Its scale, height, and quality of materials which reflect similar area residences and make the building physically inconspicuous;
 - Its standard, central hall floor plan and generous ground floor spaces which effectively meet the functional requirements of both family living and small-scale entertaining;
 - The quality of the workmanship and materials of both the exterior and the interior of the building including brick cladding, wooden doors and window frames, plaster walls, wood floors and trim;
- Its nearly symmetrical front façade, evenly spaced openings and gently sloped, hipped roofs with dormers and gables;
- The vaguely historicist yet sparse ornamentation of its exterior, relative to other houses of this period

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and level of expense, with articulation being limited to elements such as the bracketed, half-timbered gables and dormers, frieze boards and pedimented porch, brick mouldings and stack bond or soldier coursing around openings;

- The building's relationship to the site in terms of setbacks and landscaping which are characteristic of neighbouring residences; and
- Its location within Crescentwood as a symbolic landmark signifying the military's importance within the community.

For guidance on interventions, please refer to the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*. For further information contact FHBRO.

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