

Mackenzie King Estate: Kingswood
Gatineau Park

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

SUMMARY

Today the Mackenzie King Estate consists of three groupings of buildings which correspond to the three phases of the estate's development. The Kingswood Cottage complex situated on the wooded banks of Kingsmere Lake, is the earliest grouping of buildings. It consists of the original Kingswood Cottage (purchased in 1903), the Guest Cottage (purchased in 1922) and the Garage and Servant's Quarters (built in 1922).

ARCHITECTURE

The one-storey hipped roof cottages with front verandahs are fairly conventional, non-descript designed structures. They are typical summer residences of the early 20th century, characterized by their rustic simplicity. On the other hand, the Garage and Servants' Quarters, built in 1922, demonstrated some attempt at novelty in design, which lifted it above the Ontario/Quebec cottage type. Its few decorative flourishes in the form of a small balcony over the garage doors, small paned casement windows, and wood planks applied in a grid pattern to the second storey, give the design a slightly less rustic character and suggest the more genteel and refined air of an English country cottage. Another architectural element about the Kingswood grouping is King's first major landscaping scheme - a driveway to the cottage which he laid in a "serpentine fashion" and lined with low stone walls. These refinements indicate King's developing taste for landscape design rooted in the informal English landscape tradition.

HISTORY

The significance of this building complex, along with the two other groupings of the estate, lies primarily in its association with Mackenzie King. It provides a fascinating insight into the personality of a major Canadian political figure and it, more than any other property associated with King, illustrates the personality and character of the man. It was clearly regarded by King himself as his true legacy to the Canadian people.

ENVIRONMENT

Although less important than Moorside and the Farm in terms of its contribution to the character of the area and its familiarity, Kingswood is part of this 50-year project which is an interesting example of a large country estate featuring what must be one of Canada's most elaborate picturesque landscape schemes. Its setting within the Gatineau Park and its association with a major Canadian political figure compensate somewhat for its lack of architectural uniqueness and makes it a popular tourist attraction.

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