

Ottawa, Ontario  
**Rideau Hall Complex**  
Sussex Drive

### HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Rideau Hall Complex contains the official residence, the grounds and the outbuildings which together constitute the estate of the Governor General of Canada. Originally created by Thomas McKay in the 1830s as the focus of a much larger land holding, the estate was purchased by the Government of Canada in 1864. The property is currently administered by the National Capital Commission. See FHBRO Building Report 86-24.

### Reason for Designation

On January 16, 1987, the Rideau Hall Complex was designated Classified because of its important historical associations, design qualities, landmark status and environmental significance.

The earliest historical associations are with Thomas McKay, noted for his involvement in the construction of the Rideau Canal and the early development of Bytown. With the emergence of a united and independent Canada it became, as the estate of the Crown's representative in Canada, a focal point of political and social life in the Capital.

In both design and function, the complex is distinguished by the high quality and historical significance of its grounds which, from the start, have contained the essential components of a country estate in the English landscape tradition. Of a type and a completeness rare in Canada, they contain within them the traces of individual refinements and developments brought by successive governors-general and their spouses.

As the terminus of the important ceremonial route from Parliament Hill, and a clearly demarcated precinct within its decorative gates and fences, the complex is a well-known landmark to the people of Canada and a dominant influence within its more immediate neighbourhood.

### Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Rideau Hall complex resides principally in the official residence and in the grounds, including the surviving park, gardens and in the woods, laid out as an English country estate. The grounds represent a unified whole. *New* works should be in keeping and not contradict, the English landscape style.

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Particularly significant elements which should be protected are the fences and gates, the front avenue, the horseshoe-shaped garden, the private garden and conservatories/greenhouses, the cricket pitch, the front entrance park, the wild northern woods, the tennis courts and the tennis pavilion, the southern lawn and the ceremonial trees.

Buildings associated with the service area and with the former farm represent the evolution of the estate, and the many functions which supported a vice-regal residence. Alterations to the buildings\_and to the landscape in these two areas should strongly recall the traditional and historical layout and use of space and respect the architectural relationship already established.

The landscape gains its country estate effect from a careful application of the English landscape style. Its rules can be deduced from an artistic analysis of the design. The hierarchy of spaces, park, gardens, woods and farm should not be blurred by new work.