

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The secondary gates and fences were erected in the 1920s and 1930s under the auspices of the Public Works Construction Act, Thomas W. Fuller, architect, Public Works; being modeled on original design details used by Frederick Preston Rubidge on the main gate in the latter 1860s. Economic considerations necessitated the use of materials which are in need of renewal, being less permanent than those employed for the main gate.

The secondary gates and fences surround the 25 hectare Rideau Hall estate at Government House. The property is currently administered by the National Capital Commission. See FHBRO Building Report 86-24 (4b).

Reason for Designation

The secondary gates and perimeter fences at Rideau Hall were designated Recognized because of their very good proportion, scale, detail and functional design as copied from the main gate; their unchanged integrity between the structures and the associated landscape; their role reinforcing the present heritage character of the area; and their conspicuous identity within the community.

In both aesthetic design and function, the secondary gates and fences are distinguished as the outer defining element of the vice-regal estate in the British landscape tradition. Of a type and completeness rare in Canada, the entire ensemble contains a rich physical evolution of natural and cultural elements brought by a succession of Governors-General.

The five secondary gates and over 2000 m of perimeter fences clearly demarcate this well-known landmark, providing an appropriate aesthetically pleasing security aspect while also contributing to the cultural heritage of the grounds and its immediate neighbourhood.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the secondary gates and fences is determined by its form, its function, and its setting. Particularly significant elements include the cast concrete piers (pillars), the cast- and wrought-iron work, the hardware and fixtures, the estate grounds inside the fencing, and the numerous vistas of fence and grounds as viewed from the outside.

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Owing to the relatively recent date and economical materials used for the piers, the heritage significance of the materials themselves may be subordinate to the overall design and character. Replacing badly deteriorated elements with matching new work would be fully compatible with the heritage character of the secondary gates and fences when individual components become deteriorated beyond repair. It is recommended that pier replacement, as well as all other replacement work, be carried out conservatively, to ensure the longest feasible life for the 1920s and 1930s materials. Likewise, repair of iron work in place is preferable to full scale dismantling and extensive replacement, in order to provide maximum protection to the original materials. Comprehensive analysis is also recommended in order to establish the original composition of all elements subject to repair or replacement.

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