

## HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

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FHBRO Number 95-73

DFRP Number 08625

### **Recognized Federal Heritage Building**

OTTAWA, Ontario

### **Heritage House/Building #54**

Central Experimental Farm

Building #54 was constructed in 1887-8 as the residence of the Central Experimental Farm's (CEF) Agriculturalist. The plans were prepared by the Federal Department of Public Works. The building has been altered by the replacement of cedar roof shingles with asphalt shingles, the removal of edge mouldings on the gable eaves, and the removal of a small balustrade at one end of the verandah. Interior changes include the removal, repair and replacement of plaster on the ceilings and walls in the 1980s to accommodate new mechanical and electrical services. The interior layout is unchanged and the original wood trim is intact. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is the custodian. The building is currently leased to a national agricultural association. The structure is a Level 1 cultural resource located within the core of the Central Experimental Farm National Historic Site.

### **Reasons for Designation**

Building #54 has been designated "Recognized" because of its historical, architectural and environmental significance.

### **Historical Significance**

Building #54 is associated with the 19<sup>th</sup>-century agricultural reform practices promoted by the federal Department of Agriculture through the experimental farm system, and the contributions of the CEF to Canadian agricultural science. Building #54 was constructed as a residence for the CEF's Agriculturalist, one of the most senior positions in the Canadian experimental farm system. From the 1880s until the 1950s, the Agriculturalist and other senior staff lived on the CEF to tend round-the-clock research and professional responsibilities. From the 1920s to the 1950s, Building #54 was used as the CEF Director's Residence.

Building #54 is also associated with CEF's role as a model farm, and the creation of a distinctive cultural landscape at the CEF in fulfilment of that role. The building's design, immediate surroundings and physical relationship with major landscape elements, especially the Central Lawn and the main barn, demonstrate the Picturesque aesthetic that dominated the core area of the Farm during the formative period from 1886-1892. It is one of three extant CEF buildings dating from this period.

### **Architectural Significance**

The exterior treatment of Building #54 conforms to the Shingle Style used on all major CEF residences, and in a more restrained fashion on barns and outbuildings, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The large scale of the building and the attached one-storey dining hall for labourers, reflects its original function as the home of senior staff member and a model for the home of a well-to-do farmer.

### **Environmental Significance**

The enduring proximity of Building #54 to the CEF's main barn (originally the dairy barn, now replaced by the Cattle Barn) reinforces its role as a model for the residence of a well-to-do

farmer, and the connection between the house and the professional responsibilities of its occupants. The building's location facing the Central Lawn reinforces the planners' intentions to recreate the atmosphere of a country estate. The relationship between the house and its front landscape, including the semi-circular drive, is largely intact. The rear of the property was reduced by the construction of the Horticulture Building in the 1910s, and is now used for parking.

### **Character-defining elements**

The heritage character of Building #54 resides in the following character-defining elements:

- The large scale of building and the attached one-storey dining hall for farm labourers, which reveal its original function as the home of senior staff member and as a model for the home of a well-to-do farmer.
- The building's conformity to the Shingle Style, as expressed in its silhouette, form and decorative details, all beautifully and competently created in wood. Significant elements include an asymmetrical roof line, clapboard siding, multi-lite windows, flared shingled skirt on the second storey, alternating bands of clipped and straight-edged shingles on the top half of the second storey, banding courses at the window levels, and sunburst and half-timber detailing on the dormers.
- The building's residential appearance, the continuing presence of the semi-circular drive, and the retention of the building's relationship with Maple Avenue, the Central Lawn and the main barn.

All maintenance and repair work, as well as future interventions, should respect these character-defining elements.

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