

FHBRO Number 92-110

Ottawa, Ontario

**Heritage House, Building No. 60**

Central Experimental Farm

Heritage House was constructed in 1889 by the Department of Public Works under the directorship of Thomas Fuller as a residence for senior personnel of the Central Experimental Farm. The building currently houses offices of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. The most significant alteration has been a single-storey addition built in 1955 off the west elevation. The Central Experimental Farm is a National Historic Site. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 92-110.

**Reasons for Designation**

Heritage House has been designated Recognized because of its architectural importance, its environmental significance and its historical associations.

A handsome and well-executed example of the Queen Anne Revival style of architecture, Heritage House displays a superior level of design and attention to detail and reflects the importance attributed to the mission of the Central Experimental Farm (CE F) by the federal government.

The structure is a prominent component of the CEF's complex of older buildings. The residential character of the building together with its pastoral setting reinforce the character of the Farm's picturesque core which is comprised of barns, display gardens, greenhouses, laboratory buildings and open green space. As one of the earliest surviving buildings on the Farm, Heritage House testifies to the crucial role of the federal government in the physical development of Ottawa.

Heritage House is strongly associated with the early years of the Central Experimental Farm, in particular with the prominent work of William and Charles Saunders. Each man contributed significantly to national and international agricultural developments when he resided in the building.

**Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of Heritage House resides in the architectural features which associate the building with the Queen Anne Revival style of architecture, and the landscape elements which reflect the building's relationship with other buildings in the CEF complex.

The two-and-a-half-storey wood structure displays the irregular massing characteristic

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of the Queen Anne Revival style. Each of the building's elevations is distinct: a projecting octagonal bay, a verandah and a one-and-a-half-storey gabled wing leading to a one-storey drive shed all contribute to the picturesque aesthetic which are typical of the style. This is reinforced by the highly complex roof structure with its variously styled projecting dormers, and by the very well executed ornamental wood cladding. The distinct and varied massing and facade design should be respected in any interventions to the building.

The visual interplay of textures displayed by various building materials is an important contributor to the heritage character of the building. This includes the wood shingled roof, the shaped shingle siding of the second floor and the clapboard siding of the ground floor. The verandah's elaborate scroll work and turned posts and the multi-paned design of the window sash form an integral part of Heritage House's picturesque aesthetic. The ongoing maintenance of these elements should be ensured, and interventions which would detract from the building's picturesque qualities should be avoided. The polychromatic effect of the current paint scheme is appropriate to the building's character and style. The modern replacement windows found in some openings lack the texture and design of the originals, and should be replaced with compatible units when they have reached the end of their life cycle.

The 1955 one-storey addition to the rear is utilitarian in design and detailing. This addition should remain distinct from the main structure in the treatment of its asbestos siding, windows and flat roof line.

While the interior of the building has been altered to accommodate a number of office spaces by the introduction of room dividers and dropped ceilings, a great deal of the interior's original finishes survives, including fine baseboard and window mouldings, doors and stairway details. The kitchen still displays its original tongue and groove boards on the walls and ceiling, and the brick chimney with its wood stove vent is intact. The removal of the room dividers and dropped ceilings should be considered in any future renovation to the building interior. Future developments should resist removal of early fabric or alteration of the residential character of the building's layout.

Heritage House's site retains much of its original features including the circular drive, open lawns and plantings. These plantings have now matured and provide a soft screening of the later Nutrition Building nearby (1902-03) and the parking lot at the rear

of the building, and reinforce the picturesque qualities of the site. Care should be taken that these elements are properly maintained, and that any removals or additional plantings do not detract from this picturesque character.

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

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