

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

KINGSTON, Ontario
FHBRO Number **93-99**
DFRP Number **09405**
Building 55, Royal Military College
Administrative Building, Former Hospital

The RMC's first purpose-built hospital was constructed in 1903, part of a series of buildings to house the expanding College and its programs. Adjoining the earlier Mackenzie Building, the former hospital helped define the north side of the major formal space of the parade square and playing field. While not a military structure as such, the building complements the adjoining and nearby academic buildings, and fits comfortably within the institutional architecture of the period in and around Kingston as well. It has been in administrative use as an annex to the Mackenzie Building since the post-World War II reopening of the RMC in 1948.

Reasons for Designation

The former hospital and current administration building has been designated 'Recognized' for its architectural significance, its historical associations, and its environmental qualities.

Historical significance

The present administration building and former hospital was one of a series of constructions promoted by recently arrived commandant Major Raymond N.R. Reade, a British officer sent to the RMC in 1901. Among other initiatives intended to improve both educational programs and facilities, Reade authorized construction of a gymnasium, a hospital, an electrical plant, and permanent quarters for the staff-adjutant and his family. The new hospital replaced makeshift medical facilities that had been scattered throughout the campus, and helped alleviate the spread of illness among the overcrowded cadet dormitories. Expanded in 1936, the building remained in hospital use until World War II, after which it was annexed to the Mackenzie Building as part of RMC administration.

The former hospital's primary associations are with the period of its origin, the inter-war years of 1901-1914, during which the College reached a certain maturity as it began to fulfill the early mandate of a training facility for officers as well as their future instructors. The hospital and the other constructions furthered by Reade are associated as well with recognition that RMC was able to produce officers able to serve throughout the British Empire.

Architectural significance

The present administration building, a single-storey stone-clad block on a high basement, topped by a second attic storey within a mansard roof, was constructed as a hospital in 1903. Without the attic storey, the main level and basement were extended to the rear in 1936, and linked to the adjacent Mackenzie Building. The resulting block has a hybrid form and style, integrated by its random, mildly rusticated, ashlar cladding, dressed string course, and continuous eave. There is no obvious seam in the exterior where the building was extended.

The front elevation to the parade square comprises a deep porch on a stone base, edged by the chamfered string course of dressed stone that continues around the exposed faces of the building. A flight of stone steps, part of which extends beyond the base with splays to each side, approaches the main entrance, past the very slender and widely spaced columns, to a central pair of doors with

transom above. The upper storey at the front consists of a central gable-roofed pedimented projection onto the porch roof, originally a sunroom, flanked by gable roofed dormers from the mansard roof. The remainder of the flat porch roof, slightly below the roof eave, is ringed by a simple wooden balustrade.

The side elevation shows the two phases of the building: the mansard-roofed original with three window bays on each level, and shed dormers on the attic, and the flat-roofed addition seamlessly integrated to the rear. The rear elevation of the attic roof contains a central doorway flanked by windows, all together in a shed-roofed dormer with a small central gable, that gives access to the flat roof deck of the subsequent extensions, ringed by a simple wooden balustrade at its perimeter. There is a single doorway to the basement, down a few steps, at the northeast corner of the rear elevation.

There are two broad chimneys of coursed stone, ringed by mouldings: one at the side facing to the Mackenzie Building, and one at the rear, next to the rear dormer. The eaves of both the main block and the mansard roof are edged with projecting mouldings.

Windows are vertical wooden sash throughout, arranged symmetrically on the front, asymmetrically otherwise. All are tall and relatively narrow; some glazing is one-over-one, but several windows have two or four panes per unit. The continuous string course demarcating the main floor level acts as lintel for the basement windows and door on the side and rear elevations. The main-storey windows have enlarged lintels and sills, mildly rusticated in the same manner as the wall surface. The interior has been modified from its hospital origins, but traces of some mouldings survive.

Environmental qualities

The former hospital occupies level ground at the northeast corner of the parade square, part of an asymmetrical composition of symmetrical elevations constructed over time. Its relationship to the complex defining the open space remains essentially unchanged from the beginning of the 20th century, though the landscape to the rear has been altered by paving and vehicle parking over the years. The building helps provide a visual enclosure for this major space by screening views out of the northeast corner. In its present incarnation, the former hospital is known simply as the Administration Building, attached to the larger Mackenzie Building.

Character-Defining Elements

The heritage character of the former RMC hospital building comprises the following character-defining elements:

- the single stone-clad block of the main and basement storeys, with the mansard roof and chimneys denoting the original hospital portion.
- the prominent main elevation to the parade square, with its broad and high porch, stone staircase, and sunroom projection.

- the continuous stone string course and wall surfaces, and the eave mouldings that integrate original and addition.
- the varied yet harmonious fenestration of the three exposed elevations, the front porch and the dormers.
- the building's location in context, including its link to the Mackenzie Building, helping to define an essential historical and functional setting.

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*.