

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

KINGSTON, Ontario

FHBRO Number **93-99**

DFRP Number **09405**

Former Headquarters, “RMC Riding Establishment”

Building 5, Royal Military College

Recognized Federal Heritage Building

Constructed in 1908, the former headquarters of the Riding School, bearing the name “RMC Riding Establishment”, housed the offices and living quarters for those non-commissioned officers assigned to the equestrian training required by almost all military officers before World War II, as well as the care and grooming of their horses. The headquarters building is part of a small complex within the RMC, supplemented in 1916 by a capacious Riding Instruction Building, and in 1930 by a third building comprising a stable and hayloft. The building now houses offices and an apartment for the Royal Military College (RMC) campus.

Reasons for Designation

The former headquarters building for the RMC Riding Establishment (H.R.E.) has been designated Recognized for its architectural significance, its historical associations, and its environmental qualities.

Historical significance

The building was constructed in 1908 to plans from the Department of Public Works, and under the supervision of architect H.B. Smith. It provided a permanent home for the RMC’s equestrian training program, and the anchor for a further construction of training facilities through 1930.

The H.R.E.’s roles in the program of equestrian training for the officer corps and its associations with, among other things, RMC demonstrations of equitation for the public (including a version of the “Musical Ride”), place the three-building complex and its grounds as a modest but notable component of the RMC’s “local” relationships alongside its national military importance.

Architectural significance

The H.R.E. building is a two-storey block with a high basement, almost square in plan, topped by a hipped-roof attic storey presenting gabled dormers in four directions. The exterior walls are of red brick, with a shoulder-height plinth of random-coursed rusticated limestone around the basement. While all the windows have rusticated stone sills, only doorways and the dormer windows are topped by stone lintels.

The windows on all four faces are arrayed both singly and in matched pairs of vertical wooden sash, corresponding to the interior arrangements. Only the principal (east) façade is symmetrical, with a central doorway flanked by rusticated limestone blocks and topped by a flat hood moulding, approached by a set of stone steps. The north and south dormers have pairs of separate narrow windows, while the east and west dormers have somewhat wider window pairs under joined lintels.

The roof eave of the east elevation is broken to reveal a carved-stone block with the name “RIDING ESTABLISHMENT” standing out above the second-storey windows. A similar stone with “RMC” sits in the gable above, over the dormer windows. The front doorway has recently been disused and boarded up.

While both interior and exterior have been modified, there survive prominent interior elements of robust woodwork in the Arts and Crafts style of the period, including wide mouldings, original staircases and railings, and tongue-and-groove paneled doors.

Environmental qualities

The H.R.E., together with the former Riding Instruction Building of 1916 (Building 3) and the addition of a stable and hayloft in 1930 (Building 36) comprise a cohesive complex of complementing structures at the north end of the RMC campus. The group is axially aligned, and set in a generous landscape of grass and mature trees, visible from beyond the limits of the campus.

The attractive landscape was not a merely aesthetic setting, but an essential component of the equestrian training environment, from the very beginning of the Riding Establishment.

Character-Defining Elements

The heritage character of the former headquarters building for the RMC Riding Establishment comprises the following character-defining elements:

- the free-standing, roughly square-plan block with a gable-dormered, hip-roofed skyline facing four directions.
- the symmetrical fenestration and modulation of the east elevation, with a distinct but complementary asymmetry of similar elements on the remaining faces.
- the stone detailing, including the building base, lintels and sill, and the identifying carved signs and elaborated front doorway on the east elevation.
- the surviving wooden details of doors, windows and the central areas inside.
- the building's pivotal location in an attractive, visible and historically 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*.