

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

SUMMARY

The RCMP Stable Building was built in 1939-40 to house the horses of "N" Division, and is the home of the famous Musical Ride. Its main heritage significance is derived from its historical association with the transfer of RCMP Headquarters from Regina to Ottawa, the training of its recruits, and the most popular Musical Ride which gives the complex its importance as a destination for visitors, both from Ottawa and out of town.

ARCHITECTURE

The Stable building is a simply proportioned, one storey brick veneer structure, designed by Ottawa architect U.C. Sylvester. Its front facade provides no indication that the building is a stable but rather appears similar to many office buildings of the 1930s. The fenestration of the front facade is a pleasing balance of horizontal and vertical lines that follow the stepped roofline. In contrast, the side and rear facades are clearly designed with the needs of the horses and their riders in mind. This contrast adds to the charm of the building.

HISTORY

The decision to move headquarters from Regina reflects a tendency to concentrate government activities in the capital in the early years of the twentieth century.

From its inception in 1873, the RCMP relied on the highly skilled riders of the force to carry out police work across the prairies. In the early years, the Musical Ride was formerly included as part of the regular activities of the RCMP. It became increasingly famous throughout the 1920s and 1930s and performed at the Wembley Exhibition in London, England in 1930 and in New York City in 1934, among other places. In 1966, equitation ceased to be a mandatory part of the RCMP basic training. Since then, the Musical Ride and ceremonial occasions have been the only remaining aspects of RCMP activities that still use horses.

ENVIRONMENT

The RCMP Stable is part of a large complex located at the foot of St-Laurent Boulevard, bounded by the Rockcliffe Parkway and Sandridge Road. To the north and east of the complex, open space runs into the Ottawa River and the city park lands adjacent to the Parkway. Dress rehearsals of the Musical Ride are often open to the public, making the spot a favourite destination of many schools and family outings in Ottawa, as well as visitors, both from Ottawa and out of town.

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