

Ottawa, Ontario  
**La Salle Academy**  
373 Sussex Drive

## **HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

The La Salle Academy property is a complex of buildings and landscape elements from a variety of periods. It includes two significant mid-19th century buildings: the Thomas Donnelly house or Bishop's Palace, of c. 1843; and the La Salle Academy College Building, of 1852. A classroom wing was added in 1934, a gymnasium in 1965, and an office building and landscaped court in 1975. The Bishop's Palace and the College Building, fronting on Sussex Drive, had undergone numerous alterations over the years and were restored to their present configuration as part of the reworking of the site in 1975. The custodial department is Public Works Canada. See FHBRO Building Report 87-33.

### **Reasons for Designation**

The La Salle Academy property has been designated Classified, primarily because of its important historical associations with educational development in Ottawa and in Upper Canada. It also played a significant role in the physical evolution of Sussex Drive and continues to contribute strongly to the character of this "Mile of History" in the nation's capital.

The original College of Bytown, founded by Father J.E. Bruno Guigues on the property in 1847, was the region's first bilingual school and its first secondary school; it expanded and moved, and eventually became the University of Ottawa. The College Building and the attached residence continued to service the educational needs of the area in a variety of ways. The restoration and expansion of the property by architect John Leaning in 1975 was used as a model for sensitive urban renewal by the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs, who occupied the refurbished premises.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of this property is defined by the careful juxtaposition of two fine 19th century stone buildings on Sussex Drive with more contemporary elements to the north and east. It is the building exteriors which are of prime concern; the only interior of interest is the restored basement area of the Bishop's Palace.

The exterior of the Bishop's Palace was restored to its mid-19th century appearance in 1975. The stonework is original; the design of the reconstructed

doors, windows and roof was based on documentary and physical evidence. The exterior of the College Building was restored at the same time to its post-1890 appearance, a later phase in the building's evolution which was more practical if less visually appealing than the original design. These restored exteriors should be carefully maintained, and any repairs carried out in keeping with the restoration approach adopted in 1975. New documentary evidence or new materials and technology may allow some of these design intentions to be more fully implemented over time.

The more contemporary elements are evidence of the site's evolutionary character, and have acquired their own historical associations. They should be maintained as secondary to the 19th century components of Sussex Drive. The existing balance appears to work well in providing a strong image of historical continuity.

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