

Jasper, Alberta
Superintendent's Residence and Garage
510 Robson Street

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Superintendent's Residence and Garage were constructed in 1936 as one of the government's depression relief projects. Initial plans for the property were prepared in 1935 by A.M. Calderon, architect of the Administration Building and other Jasper landmarks, but rejected when bids came in too high. Revised plans were prepared by the Architectural Division of the National Parks of Canada, and the residence and garage built by J.L. Arnett of Edmonton. The residence still serves in its original capacity, and is considered the finest residence today in Jasper. The custodial department is Environment Canada. See FHBRO Building Report 87-1 37.

Reasons for Designation

The Superintendent's Residence and Garage have been designated Recognized primarily because of their architectural significance, and their contribution to the character of the townsite.

The design of the residence was influenced by Calderon's drawings, but modified by the Architectural Division of National Parks to cut costs. By this time, the Architectural Division had established a relatively well-defined approach to an architecture considered appropriate to the protection and enhancement of the natural environment. The "rustic" aesthetic emphasized the use of natural materials, such as fieldstone, log and shingle, and the incorporation of the English traditions of half-timbering and the Swiss traditions of wood construction and decorative work. The design of the Superintendent's residence exhibited the irregular massing and picturesque detailing associated with this approach, as well as the extensive use of fieldstone, stucco, and wood. The garage is of similar design, with stucco and wood finishes and considerable detail in the fenestration.

The property is not located immediately within the core area defined by the Administration Building, but is known as a fine residence and highlighted on the historic walking tour. Residents are fully aware of the building and its inhabitants.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Superintendent's Residence and Garage is defined by the exterior treatment of the buildings, and by their associated landscape. The interior of the residence is compatible in form and detail.

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The residence is two-storey wood frame building, with a truncated hip roof extending down on three sides to cover various extensions, including a substantial sunroom on the left elevation. Shed dormers with multiple windows pierce the hip roof on all sides, and a five-sided, one-and-a-half-storey turret projects to the rear. The front entrance also projects and has its own gable. The walls are stuccoed, with foundation walls of stone and a large fieldstone chimney running up the front of the house. The windows are multi-paned, sometimes shuttered, and of various shapes including round and octagonal. The interior of the house has retained most of its original layout and much of the original trim and finishes, among them the fireplace, French doors and window seat.

The garage is a substantial wood frame building with similar stucco wall finish. Shutters have been added to the paired and tripled multi-paned windows, and wood panelling provided under the eaves on two sides.

The priority for any work on this property is to maintain the original materials and finishes. These are part of a carefully-considered aesthetic, and provide a consistency and quality to the design that could easily be lost or diluted. There should be an active program of preventive maintenance, with periodic programs of repair and replacement using qualified conservators and accurate historical documentation. Repair is preferred to replacement wherever possible. It is important to maintain the small-paned windows, the detailing of the wood finishes, and the rustic fieldstone highlights. Colours should be maintained as existing or modified to recover an earlier colour scheme based on paint analysis. Any alterations, if required, should enhance the heritage character of the property.

The landscaping of the grounds is an important component of these buildings in the "rustic" style. The evolution of the landscape treatment over the years should be documented and recorded, and used as a basis for any changes that are required. Surviving original features of the landscape should be identified and preserved.

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