

Ottawa, Ontario
Rideau Hall Complex
Gate Lodge (Gatekeeper's Lodge)

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The octagonal gate lodge was constructed in the late 1860s, in conjunction with the erection of the main gate at the west end of the Rideau Hall grounds 450 m from the main house. Frederick Preston Rubidge, Public Works architect, was likewise responsible for many of the other improvements to the former McKay property as it became the vice-regal estate. The gate lodge is currently used for security and administrative purposes and is administered by the National Capital Commission. See FHBRO Building Report 86-24 (1c).

Reason for Designation

The ancillary building was designated Recognized because of its aesthetic design; the integrity of its relationship between surrounding landscape features, especially the main gate; its role in reinforcing the heritage character of the immediate area; and the very familiar nature of the gate lodge's identity within the community.

In its visual attributes and the quality of workmanship, the gate lodge is considered a very good example of an important designer's work. But clearly, its most distinguishing characteristics are its unchanged association with the estate and the public area outside the main gate, providing an obvious functional purpose related to security and at the same time serving as the only building on the vice-regal estate visible from the public portion of the ceremonial route from Parliament Hill.

There is considerable tradition in this symbolic prominence of protective function with architecturally delightful elements including folly or fancy. Overall, the gate lodge strongly reinforces the heritage character of the area and is a conspicuous aspect of the site.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the gate lodge at Rideau Hall resides in the form of the two-storey octagonal structure, the continuation of its function, the setting, and the cultural associations contained in this ensemble, clearly recognizable of Rubidge's original design.

This image of the main entrance, including the gate lodge, is shared with each dignitary, passer-by, and public visitor. It helps to maintain an association with the special heritage of Canada's head-of-state and the contemporary activities outside the grounds.

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Gate Lodge (Gatekeeper's Lodge) (Continued)

Elements of the building's exterior which help define its character include the eight-sided conical roof with central chimney, the surviving original pedimented wings, the facing brick, arched windows and doors, key stone sculptures, and notable decorative brickwork.

Both the east wing, dating from 1938 and the north wing, dating from 1944, used different coloured materials from the original structure. All are unified by off-white paint over a thin stucco-like coating, echoing the gate and fence piers, and softening the contrast between the gate lodge, its additions, and the gate itself.

The quality of design for the main gate and gate lodge are arguably more successful in their dignified, harmonious, and handsomely detailed architectural elements than Rubidge used for his very large expansion to the main house at Rideau Hall. The octagonal form of the gate lodge has since been repeated a number of times on the estate, such as the guard house, the dairy, the taxi house, and the cricket pavillion tower.

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