

Ottawa, Ontario  
**Rideau Hall Complex**  
Main Gate (Entrance Gate)

## **HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

The main gate was erected in 1867-68 under the direction of Frederick Preston Rubidge, the first of several architects from Public Works who have contributed in a significant manner to the physical evolution of Rideau Hall. It continues to serve as the primary entrance to Canada's vice-regal estate. It is currently administered by the National Capital Commission. See FHBRO Building Report 86-24 (1b).

### **Reason for Designation**

The main gate was designated Classified because of its very good proportions, scale, detail, and functional design as conceived by the first architect of the Rideau Hall as a vice-regal estate, and because it continues to survive with its integrity unchanged set in the context of its historical relationship with Rubidge's adjacent gate lodge, the distinguished landscape at Rideau Hall, and the public plaza at the intersection of Sussex Drive and Pine Street. The main gate continues to fulfill its original function as the main entrance and to establish the heritage character of this important area, now designated as the public terminus for the important ceremonial route originating from Parliament Hill.

The gate and the immediate site have been altered very little over the years. Changes have been limited primarily to replacement lanterns over the flanking large piers, the evolution of the road surface, the appearance of the plaza, and increased requirement for gate house additions and security structures to the east. The main gate piers and ironwork were used as the model for the perimeter fence which was rebuilt to its present configuration in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of the main gate is determined by its form, its function, and its setting, all of which are nearly unchanged from the original intent by Rubidge to dignify the entrance to the grounds. This image, which is shared with each dignitary, public visitor, and passer-by, originates through association with the gate as the transitional element between the heritage of Canada's head-of-state and outside contemporary activities.

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## **Rideau Hall Complex**

### **Main Gate (Entrance Gate) Cont'd**

The main gate is the primary connecting element between Rideau Hall and the outside. Within the vice-regal estate is a physical symbol of Canada's historical ties with the Crown, as presented in a British country estate. Outside the main gate is the Prime Minister's residence, the Ottawa River, and Sussex Drive leading to the Village of Rockcliffe Park on the northeast and Parliament Hill, etc. on the southwest.

Particularly significant elements which define the heritage character of the main gate are the four masonry piers, the original ornate cast-iron and wrought-iron gates, the adjacent wooded area inside the grounds, the road right-of-way, the road alignment, the adjacent gate house, the attached perimeter fence, and the plaza area on the outside. The cast-iron gates appear to have been produced by Wm. Glendinneng Manufacturer, Montreal, 1868, as indicated by casting on one of the centre leaves.

The light fixtures atop the taller piers and the road surface through the gates are of a later period but also have heritage significance. The ceremonial, security, and cultural activities associated with the gate are also significant, as evidence of the evolutionary nature of supporting the official vice-regal residence. Recent security features and works are the least significant to the main gate's heritage character.

Alterations to the less significant elements should respect the original form, function and setting of the main gate. For example, paving materials should not be so obvious as to visually compete with the gate itself and changes to the plaza should maintain the visual openness, allowing the original gate elements to provide the balanced impression of security and access. Neither the function nor the hierarchy of spaces, ancillary works, and natural elements should be blurred by new work.

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