

Toronto, Ontario  
**Officers' Mess and Quarters** (Building No. 1)  
Armour Heights College  
215 Yonge Boulevard

## **HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

The Officer's Mess and Quarters (Building No. 1) was originally constructed in 1914 as the main house on a suburban estate belonging to Colonel F. B. Robins. The building, designed by the architectural firm of George and Moorhouse, is noteworthy as an outstanding example of residential architecture in a Tudor Revival manner. A new kitchen and dining room addition was built in 1954. Now part of the Canadian Forces College, the building is the property of the Department of National Defence. See FHBRO Building Report 90-70.

### **Reasons for Designation**

The Officers' Mess and Quarters was designated Recognized because of its historical associations, its architectural significance and its relationship to the surrounding environment.

The Officers' Mess and Quarters is directly associated with the theme of professionalization of the Canadian Armed Forces. It was leased to the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1943 as a military training school. The site had been associated with the Air Force since 1918 when part of the estate was used as an airfield.

As the major building of the campus, the Officers' Mess and Quarters is an integral component of its residential character and has considerable symbolic value in the context of military history in Canada, particularly to alumni of the college.

Within the federal inventory, the house is an outstanding example of a grand home built in the Tudor Revival style. The design integrity of the structure has been retained, with the main elevations and major interior spaces largely intact.

The original domestic estate has evolved into a campus but the relationship of the Officers' Mess and Quarters to newer, adjacent buildings and to the site has been respected. The Officers' Mess and Quarters remains the centrepiece of the campus.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The property's heritage character is reflected in its scale, massing, fenestration, materials, and details of the original structure outside and inside, as well as its relationship with the residential campus it dominates.

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Designed in the Tudor Revival style, its character - defining elements include

cross-gables, mock half-timbering, and leaded casement windows. Other characteristics include the Spanish tile roof, porte-cochère, dormers, French doors, terraces, composite chimney pots and Tudor arches. The construction materials - sandstone, limestone, stucco, clay tile - provide visual and textural interest. Horizontal massing, projecting gables and the porte-cochère evoke English vernacular architectural traditions.

The interior detailing follows a "Jacobean" motif and is rich in paneling, ribbed and beamed ceilings, decorative plaster, cornices and wooden wainscoting, with elaborately carved fireplace mantels. The dark stained oak and mahogany paneling are an important feature of the interior and should be maintained in form and finish.

Major rooms and public spaces have retained their original form, and should continue to be preserved. Required modifications to accommodate new functions should be made with as little disruption of original floor plans and finishes as possible.

The original character and materials of the exterior have been preserved largely intact. This should be continued. The building has many custom features such as bookcases, hardware and lighting fixtures that are integral to the fabric of the building and should be maintained.

The Officers' Mess and Quarters remains the visual and ceremonial focus of the campus, and sets the genteel tone reflected in surrounding buildings. Despite evolution of the estate, the site retains much of its historical integrity, with the "oval" in front of the Officer's Mess, a formal garden to the east, and the former gardener's cottage to the west. Traditional features of the grounds should be retained, and the building's prominence on the site respected in any development.

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