

FHBRO HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT CENTRAL LABORATORY, CFB SUFFIELD, ALBERTA

FHBRO number: **97-40**
DFRP number: **14976**
Resource name: **Central Laboratory, Building B1**
Address: **CFB Suffield, Suffield, Alberta**
FHBRO status: **"Recognized" Federal Heritage Building**
Construction: **1955**
Designer: **unknown; built by Burns and Dutton Ltd.**
Original function: **military research**
Current function: **military research; administrative offices**
Modifications: **Windows replaced (1970); addition of one-storey mechanical room (1992); doors and windows at front entrance replaced and handrail installed (1 993-4); some windows bricked in; all interior finishes in front foyer replaced; modifications to interior finishes, fixtures and partitions in laboratories**
Custodian: **Department of National Defence**

Reasons for Designation

Central Laboratory is a "Recognized" Federal Heritage Building because of its historical associations, and its architectural and environmental values:

Historical value:

The Central Laboratory is associated with the expansion of the Canadian military during the Cold War and with increased government spending on military research during that period. It was built to accommodate Defence Research Board (DRB) laboratories for research into the defence of chemical and biological warfare. The Central Laboratory is also associated with the early development of the Suffield Experimental Station, one of several military research centres established by the DRB after the Second World War.

Architectural value:

Central Laboratory typifies the modern classical style favoured for government buildings during the 1950s. Classicism is expressed in the four storey building's essential symmetry and in the monumental entrance with its pilastered portico. Modernism is evident in the building's horizontal massing and fenestration, the flat roof, the stripped-down simplicity of the pilasters and portico, and the lack of decoration. Brise-soleil emphasized the horizontal pattern of the fenestration, thereby serving both functional and aesthetic purposes. The building was designed by Calgary architects Stevenson and Dewar.

Environmental value:

The Central Laboratory reinforces the mid-20th century character of the setting and is situated on a large, flat, open site within the administrative sector of CFB Suffield. It is surrounded by buildings of similar age, materials and siting. It is well-known within the base by virtue of its important research function and its role as Defence Research and Development Canada Suffield (DRDC Suffield) headquarters.

FEDERAL HERITAGE BUILDING REVIEW OFFICE
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Character-Defining Elements

The following character-defining elements of Central Laboratory should be respected:

Its role as an illustration of the expansion of the Canadian military and increased spending on military research during the 1950s is reflected in:

- its substantial size, permanent construction and prominent location within CFB Suffield.

Its modern classical style as manifested in:

- the essential symmetry of its massing and the presentation of its front facade;
- the monumental, central portico with simple, unadorned pilasters;
- the horizontal emphasis evident in its massing, bands of windows and brise-soleil;
- the flat roof and overall lack of decoration.

The manner in which it reinforces the mid-20th-century character of the setting as evidenced in:

- its location on a large, flat, open, grassed site, served by paved parking lots and circumnavigated by paved access roads, in the midst of similarly sited buildings of compatible age, function and construction.

For guidance on interventions, please refer to the FHBRO Code of Practice. For further information contact FHBRO.

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