FHBRO Number 96-134
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Ottawa, Ontario

Horticulture Building (Building No. 55)
Central Experimental Farm

The Horticulture Building (Building No. 55) at the Central Experimental Farm was constructed in phases to designs that were probably prepared by the Department of Public Works. While not all dates of construction of the various components are known, it is known that a portion of the long wing to the rear of the building existed prior to the addition of the front block in 1930, and that it was altered at this time to bring its appearance in line with the new construction. Additions occurred again in 1937 and 1943. The current occupant is the Agriculture Canada Research Branch, Food Research Centre, and Corporate Headquarters. Agriculture Canada is the custodian of the Central Experimental Farm National Historic Site. See FHBRO Building Report 96-134.

Reasons For Designation

The Horticulture Building at the Central Experimental Farm has been designated Recognized primarily for its historical and environmental qualities but also for its architectural design. It is closely associated with the work of Malcolm Bancroft Davis who was appointed Dominion Horticulturalist in 1933 and who is regarded as one of Canada's pioneering horticulturalists.

Canada's experimental farm system was inaugurated on June 2, 1886 with the enactment of legislation which authorized the establishment of five farms. The Central Experimental Farm at Ottawa was to be the principal station. The construction of the Horticulture Building coincided with the directorship of Dr. E.S. Archibald who promoted a systematic and specialized approach to research. The building illustrates the role of research which, along with education, formed the major functions of Canada's experimental farms system.

The Horticulture Building was the working home of Malcolm Bancroft Davis, whose early work regarding fruit and vegetable storage led to some of the early developments of the frozen-food industry, and of vegetable dehydration and packaging. Davis was also one of five founding members of the Agricultural Institute of Canada in 1920, had assisted in the formation of the Canadian Society for Horticultural Science in 1956, and was elected to the Canadian Agricultural Hall of Fame in 1980.

The Horticulture Building is located prominently on the Driveway, a roadway passing west to east through the Farm. Its relationship with neighbouring structures such as the

Storage Building (No.56) and the Dairy Technology Building (No.57) has remained essentially unchanged since 1936. The Horticulture Building's landmark value derives

The finish materials and detailing are an intrinsic part of the Queen Anne/Tudor Revival design. As opportunity arises, replacing the existing windows with wood casement or

largely from being a complementary component of the larger farm complex situated on the Driveway.

Stylistically, the building is a hybrid of Queen Anne and Tudor Revival styles. The enlargement of the Horticulture Building in the 1930s represents a period of urban growth in Ottawa as federal facilities expanded during the depression years. Its enlargement was part of the physical evolution of the Farm, which can be linked to a conscious movement toward modern, scientific approaches in agricultural and horticultural research.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Horticulture Building resides in elements of its architectural design and in its role as a component of the farm operation. The massing is residential in scale, consisting of a compact, two-storey front block with a long, back wing of one and a half storeys.

It is the front block, built in 1930, which best exemplifies the aesthetics of the then-popular architectural revival styles. The front block employs the decorative half-timbering and textural contrasts associated with the style in its later manifestations. It is an attractive, hip-roofed structure with a high stone basement, brick-clad first storey and a projecting second storey finished to imitate half-timbering with stucco infill. The main facade is symmetrically arranged with an attractive, centrally placed main entrance under a stone arch. At the second storey, there is a projecting central bay with a gabled roof which breaks into the main roofline. The heritage character of both the interior and exterior of the front block would be enhanced by maintaining the original volumes, features and finishes, and by reinstating those missing or altered as the opportunity arises.

The rear wing is the product of many alterations and does not possess the clarity of design apparent in the front block. There are a variety of wall constructions denoting various additions occurring before and after construction of the 1930s front block. Similarly, windows and dormers are irregularly spaced, although the original openings are of a consistent size. Notwithstanding, the stucco walls and mansard roof, which are a result of the 1930s renovations, should be respected in any new work.

double-hung units according to the original scale and design would enhance the exterior appearance of the entire building. Similarly, improvements can be made by maintaining or reinstating the full window heights and relocating laboratory venting to the roof. Utilizing a 1930s palette of construction materials, masonry and half-timbering with stucco infill at the exterior and drywall or plaster with c. 1930s casework at the interior, would be appropriate for any new work.

The interior consists of a mix of offices, workrooms and laboratories. In the front portion of the building, the residential character makes the present office accommodations an appropriate use. In the rear wing, there are offices, workrooms and the heavy chemistry laboratories. Although the laboratories are not entirely in keeping with the residential scale of the building, implementing a proper laboratory venting system with regularly spaced roof vents would mitigate the visual impact on the building, namely by eliminating window obstructions and raising ceilings above window heads.

Any changes to the grounds should be carefully considered to ensure that the traditional site relationships between the Horticulture Building and the Storage and the Dairy Technology Buildings are maintained. As well, its visual presence on the Driveway should not be diminished.

For further guidance, please refer to the *FHBRO Code of Practice*.

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