

FHBRO HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT MACKENZIE SCHOOL, COLD LAKE, AB

FHBRO Number: **05-047**
DFRP Number: **15684**
Resource Name: **MacKenzie School**
Address: **Building 83, Hickory Street, (CFB Cold Lake – 4 Wing), Cold Lake, Alberta**
FHBRO Status: **“Recognized” Federal Heritage Building**
Construction: **1957**
Designer: **Craig and Madill**
Original Function: **School**
Current Function: **School**
Modifications: **Addition of yellow metal panels in the upper section of the windows (80’s)**
New play structure (date unknown)
Custodian: **Department of National Defence**

Description of Historic Place

MacKenzie School consists of a simple, asymmetric, rectangular building, clad with red-orange brick, and featuring a flat roof and horizontal fenestration. The building is set in a planned residential area at the Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Cold Lake, which is located 280km northwest of Edmonton. As a place of learning, the school provided essential services to children in the surrounding area. The designation is confined to the footprint of the building.

Heritage Value

MacKenzie School is a “Recognized” Federal Heritage Building because of its historical associations, and its architectural and environmental values:

Historical value:

MacKenzie School is a convenient illustration of the creation of permanent armed forces in Canada after World War II and the accommodation of families on military bases. The school was part of a nationwide construction program that aimed at providing the social infrastructures for permanent troops. Built in response to the increased military personnel in the early 1950’s and the creation of permanent residential subdivisions, the school is a convenient example of the local development associated with that period. The school became an important element in a comprehensive planned community and representative of the self-sufficiency of the military base. The building also acts as a focal point in the subdivision and fosters closeness and cohesion within the community.

Architectural value:

MacKenzie School is a good example of the International Style, with its simple and asymmetrical massing, an emphasis on horizontality, and references to the grid motif. The building is also characterized by good functional design that meets the basic design principles and construction standards set by DND with regards to durability and functionality. The interior layout offers a simple and efficient solution to the functional program, and also addresses the concerns of the time regarding traffic flow, safety, acoustics, and natural

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lighting and ventilation. Constructed as a brick-clad steel and concrete structure, the building demonstrates the use of common building techniques, standard engineered construction, and durable, good quality materials.

Environmental value:

A major element in the development and layout of the area, MacKenzie School reinforces the residential character of the neighbourhood by acting as a hub around which two-storey multi-family dwellings are arranged. Standing on a large lot with a lawn at the back and paved play area to the west, the school stands out from the surrounding housing because of its size, colour and setback. The school is a well-known feature in the neighbourhood and is familiar to the people living on the base.

Character-Defining Elements

The following character-defining elements of MacKenzie School should be respected:

Its good aesthetic and functional design, and good quality materials and craftsmanship as manifested in:

- Its compact and simple two-storey massing composed of two rectangular blocks housing the classrooms and gymnasium, joined in an asymmetrical manner and clad in red-orange brick;
- Its flat roof, the strong horizontal lines of the fenestration and grid motif of the exterior facades, which are typical of the International Style;
- Its simple and practical linear plan, consisting of a central corridor with classrooms on either side, allowing for better acoustics and access to natural light;
- The location of its main entrance, where the school and gymnasium intersect, as well as the secondary doors at each end of the corridor, facilitating traffic flow and concurring with safety measures; and,
- The durability of its construction materials, including its steel, reinforced concrete structure, and brick cladding.

The manner in which the building represents the theme of the creation of a permanent armed force in Canada after World War II, and how it reinforces the residential character of this neighbourhood at CFB Cold Lake- 4-Wing as evidenced in:

- Its spatial relationship with the residential neighbourhood, where it constitutes a central hub and major element in the neighbourhood around which housing is arranged;
- Its large size, setback from the street and colours, distinguishing it from the surrounding housing; and,
- Its relationship to its site, consisting of a large lot with a lawn in the back and a paved play yard to the west, which has remained unchanged in character.

For guidance on interventions, please refer to the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*. For further information contact FHBRO.

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