

Ottawa, Ontario  
**Prime Minister's Residence**  
24 Sussex Drive

## **HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

24 Sussex Drive was built in 1867-68 by Joseph Merrill Currier, a prosperous lumber manufacturer. It was designed by his brother J.M. Currier, an architect who came from the U.S.A. Since 1949, it has served as the official residence of the Prime Minister of Canada. It is owned by the National Capital Commission. See FHBRO Building Report 85-67.

### **Reason for Designation**

On July 11, 1986, 24 Sussex Drive was designated Classified because of its direct association with six Prime Ministers of Canada, because of its status as a nationally known landmark, and because of the impact of the house and its grounds on the character of the area.

During its first 75 years, the house was associated with three of the "lumber barons" of the area. By 1943 it was the last remaining private residence on Sussex Drive, in an area given over increasingly to foreign embassies and parkland. It was expropriated by the Government of Canada, and became the official residence of the Prime Minister in 1949.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of 24 Sussex Drive is determined in part by the evolutionary nature of the property. Modifications have substantially altered the original Gothic Revival design, first to a châteauxque appearance with towers, oriel windows and porte-cochère, and in 1949 to a more restrained and formal design. The present façades, relatively unadorned and tied together by the horizontal roof lines and rows of rectangular, shuttered windows, give the house a certain unity and balance which must be respected. This is the image which has become significant through association with the Prime Ministers who have lived there.

Apart from its major elevations, the character of the house is defined by its outstanding location. The most significant surviving landscape feature which should be protected is the circular drive connecting the property to Sussex Drive. In general, the grounds are open making the house the most prominent element. This characteristic should be retained; consequently any attempt to introduce buildings for support staff or for auxiliary activities should be discouraged. The house commands magnificent views, and is further enhanced by its setting on the ceremonial route between the Governor General's residence and Parliament Hill. Its role as an important symbolic and visual landmark must be recognized in any alterations to either the house exterior or its grounds.

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