

Summerland, British Columbia
Former Superintendent's Residence
Summerland Research Station

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The former superintendent's residence on the Summerland Research Station at Summerland, British Columbia was built between 1923 and 1926 to the designs of the Experimental Farms Branch of the Department of Agriculture. It is the property of Agriculture Canada. See FHBRO Building Report 89-03.

Reasons for Designation

The former superintendent's residence was designated Recognized for its historical associations, its architectural importance, and its environmental significance.

The building of the Summerland Research Station signaled a new era in agricultural science in the early 20th century and the accompanying expansion of the Experimental Farms Branch of the Department of Agriculture. Established in 1914, the Station was one of several opened across Canada to match growth in new farming regions and was concerned both with the problems of orchard production and canning, and the viability of introducing vegetable, livestock and tobacco farming to the semi-arid region.

The former superintendent's residence was erected under the direction of the Station's superintendent, Wilbur T. Hunter. The building provided on-site accommodation for the superintendents. From 1969, the residence functioned as a combination administration building/library, and in recent years as a museum.

Built in the English cottage style with its asymmetrical massing and numerous porches and dormers, the house is typical of the residential architecture emerging in the 1920s. It is the only recorded example of an English Cottage style residence built on Canada's experimental farms, and the only structure surviving from the Station's first three decades of existence.

The building's landscape, embellished first to provide privacy and amenity for its tenant, the Superintendent, well complements the rambling horizontal form of the house itself and provides a focal counterpoint to the ornamental gardens and picnic area within the Station's "decorative area".

Character Defining Elements

The architectural character of the residence resides in the asymmetrical disposition of its roofs, dormers and volumes, and in the use of wood in construction and as a finish

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material. Other important distinguishing elements include the fieldstone pillars at the

front entrance, and the sidelights and coach lights adjacent to the door. Its numerous windows, porches and galleries link the building with its landscape and should be carefully maintained.

The exterior is unchanged except for the enclosure of the east porch to form a sunroom, and the removal of canvas awnings over the upper storey windows. Consideration could be given to the reinstatement of awnings during future renovations.

Despite changes in use over the years, the interior detailing and room layout has remained intact; the woodwork, wood and tile fireplaces, and curved staircase are in place and in good condition. The track lighting added for museum use, while very much reversible, could be replaced with a lighting system more sympathetic to the historic nature of the house.

The complementary relationship of the house to the site has evolved in a positive manner over time, and should be maintained in any site developments contemplated for the station.

1992.12.08