

Rideau Canal, Ontario
Defensible Lockmaster's House
Chaffeys Lockstation

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Lockmaster's House at Chaffeys Lockstation was built between 1844 and 1848 as one of the last of the defensible dwellings on the canal. In 1895, a second storey was added, and the interior layout was modified. Prior to the 1930s, two frame extensions were built, but these were demolished in 1964. The current frame addition on the north side was built by the Canadian Parks Service in 1970. Environment Canada Parks Service, is the custodial department. See FHBRO Building Report 89-158.

Reason for Designation

The Defensible Lockmaster's House at Chaffeys Lockstation was designated Recognized because of its historical associations, aesthetic design and craftsmanship, and its environment.

As one of the last defensible lockmaster's houses to be built, this residence exemplifies the change in the role of the Rideau Canal from a military function to that of transportation. The lockstation was the focus for settlement in the 19th century, while at the turn of the century, it became the centre of resort development. Currently, the house is a locally operated museum interpreting the historic role of the canal in the area.

The house retains elements of its original military form as well as those added features characteristic of a late 19th century residence. The park-like setting of the house is in keeping with the resort era at the turn of the century. The house retains its historic orientation to the site.

Character Defining Elements

The Chaffeys Lockmaster's House is a two-storey pyramidal-roof structure, with symmetrical front and rear facades. The integration of the first and second storeys is superior to other examples of similarly modified lockmaster's houses. The addition of a second-storey balcony to the original defensible porch creates a strong central focus on the entrance facade. Careful placement of the upper storey sash windows above those of the lower reinforces the symmetry. The interior layout survives unmodified from the late 19th century.

The regularly coursed stone masonry of the lower storey and defensible porch represent the competent craftsmanship of the Royal Engineers. The original fabric should be retained and the frame second storey addition should be respected. Inspection and maintenance of these materials on a regular schedule is recommended.

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The building is situated on a rise above the canal, retaining its original orientation to the site. The current landscape derives from the resort era, rather than the military period, and is in keeping with both the residential nature of the design and the current museum function. It would be appropriate to retain the environment in its present form.

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