



6. OFFICIAL RESIDENCE CARDS

Rideau Hall

Rideau Hall has been the official residence and workplace of every governor general of Canada since 1867.

The governor general lives here, confers with the leader of Canada's government, hosts foreign dignitaries, and performs the functions of Canada's head of state, as the representative of the Crown in Canada. This heritage site is also a national gathering place, where the governor general presents honours and awards to recognize excellence. The residence is designated a "classified" heritage building by the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office.

Rideau Hall is the largest official residence in the National Capital Region, and the only one open to the public.



History

In 1838, Thomas McKay, a wealthy entrepreneur, built his elegant family home on the outskirts of Ottawa. This impressive 11-room structure earned the nickname "McKay's Castle" among the neighbours.

The grounds

The grounds of Rideau Hall represent one of the finest historic landscapes in Canada. In 1998, they were designated as a cultural landscape of national historic significance by the Minister of Canadian Heritage. Under British landscape tradition, the grounds are divided between treed lawns, flowerbeds and service areas, with some areas remaining in a semi-wild state.

Despite the British inspiration, these grounds have an unmistakable Canadian quality. In the 19th century, they became the centre of a culture of winter, as governor generals and their families enjoyed snowshoeing, tobogganing, skating, and skiing on these grounds.

Rehabilitation and the future of Rideau Hall

The National Capital Commission's (NCC) work at Rideau Hall is part of a broader ongoing program seeking to preserve, maintain, and restore all the official residences under NCC management.

In June 2021, the NCC released the NCC's Official Residences of Canada: Asset Portfolio Condition Report. This document details the investment needed to restore Canada's official residences to good condition. You can learn more at: <https://ncc-ccn.gc.ca/places/rideau-hall>.

Hint for finding this location on the Giant Floor Map

- Found on a large parcel of NCC-owned or managed land, the Governor General's residence can be found just east of the Rideau River or Tabaskà Zibi.



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Harrington Lake

The residence at Harrington Lake (Lac Mousseau) is the country residence of the prime minister of Canada.

Harrington Lake offers the head of the Canadian government a tranquil place to rest, reflect, and confer in a secure, secluded and informal setting. It is located in Gatineau Park. The main house at Harrington Lake is designated as a "recognized" federal heritage building.

This residence is closed to the public.

History

- **One lake, two names**

The history of Harrington Lake has its origins in the 19th century era of settlement. Several families came to settle in the area, including the Harringtons and the Mousseau family. The lake eventually became known as "Harrington Lake" in English and "Lac Mousseau" in French. It is now designated as 'Lac Mousseau' (selon la commission toponymique).

- **Connection to the lumber industry**

The Mousseau family had built a farm on the shore of the lake, and the property remained in the family for several decades. The harsh terrain of the Gatineau Hills was not well suited to farming, and the lumber industry soon replaced farming as the main economic activity. In the early 20th century, two Americans, W. A. Drum and W. L. Donnelly, built a sawmill at Harrington Lake to take advantage of the wealth of the region's forests.

- **The country house**

In the 1920s, Cameron Macpherson Edwards, a member of an important lumbering family in Ottawa, inherited part of the property. He recognized the value of the land for recreation, as well as for lumber. He purchased more land around the lake, expanding his total holdings to some 1,200 hectares (3,000 acres). He also ordered the demolition of the mill buildings at Harrington Lake, and replaced them with the house that stands today. The 16-room house was designed in the Colonial Revival style, very common in the 1920s, but with the addition of large fieldstone chimneys.

- **A place for the prime minister**

In 1951, the federal government purchased the Edwards property, along with those of William Duncan Herridge and the Healey family. Stanley Healey became the first government caretaker at Harrington Lake. The government did not act immediately on the idea of using part of the property to create a secluded retreat for Canada's prime minister. The arrival of John Diefenbaker as prime minister in 1958 was the deciding factor. Diefenbaker was the first Canadian prime minister from Western Canada. Unlike previous political leaders, he had no home of his own or cottage in central Canada to which he could retreat. Caretaker Stanley Healey is said to have taken Diefenbaker fishing at Harrington Lake, and won his support for the creation of an official country residence.



Hint for finding this location on the Giant Floor Map

- This site can be found along the northwestern border of Gatineau Park.



6. OFFICIAL RESIDENCE CARDS

7 Rideau Gate

The property at 7 Rideau Gate serves as a “home away from home” for visiting dignitaries.

The National Capital Commission (NCC) has managed this official residence since 1988. The property includes 0.2 hectares (0.49 acre) of grounds and one main house covering approximately 797.6 square metres (8,566 square feet). Much of the original character and spirit of this historic old house has been recaptured. The house is decorated and furnished to create a distinctly Canadian experience for visitors.

This residence is closed to the public.

History

The residence at 7 Rideau Gate was built about 150 years ago by a prosperous Ottawa businessman. It has been home to some of the most prominent families in Ottawa's history.

- **A mill owner's home**

In 1862, Henry Osgoode Burritt bought a parcel of land in the industrial village of New Edinburgh and built a house there. Burritt owned a woollen mill at Rideau Falls and had decided to settle nearby. The house was typical accommodation for Ottawa's new business elite and a signal that Ottawa was beginning to flourish as an industrial centre. In 1873, Burritt sold the house for what was then the substantial sum of \$10,000.

- **Edgewood**

The new owner was Philemon Wetherall Wright, the grandson of pioneers. The Wrights called their new house “Edgewood,” which gives some sense of how close the wilderness came to the city in those days. They remained at Edgewood for only three years, and the house remained vacant for some years after their departure.

- **Aristocratic inhabitants**

In 1884, the Honourable Octavius Henry Lambart, younger son of the British Earl of Cavan, moved into the house with his wife, a Canadian. The Lambarts remained in the house until 1934. The second Lambart owner, Frederick Howard John Lambart, was a civil engineer who helped to survey the Canada-Alaska boundary.

- **Government of Canada acquiring the house**

The government of Canada acquired the house in 1966. Because of its ideal location – on the doorstep of Rideau Hall – 7 Rideau Gate became an official residence to serve as a guest house for state visitors. In 1988, the NCC assumed responsibility for all official residences in the National Capital Region. It fully restored and refurnished the house, with the help of the Canadiana Fund, which receives donations of heritage art and furniture.



Hint for finding this location on the Giant Floor Map

- Look for Confederation Boulevard (see legend) and follow it to its most northern point. The location you are looking for will have an “official residence” icon (see legend).



6. OFFICIAL RESIDENCE CARDS

Stornoway

Stornoway is the official residence of Canada's leader of the Opposition and is a recognized federal heritage building.

Stornoway has been home to a number of historical figures, including the exiled Princess Juliana of the Netherlands, and many prime ministers. It is located at 541 Acacia Avenue in Ottawa's Rockcliffe Park.

This residence is closed to the public.

History

- **A "country" house**

In the early 1900s, Rockcliffe Park Village was a rural area that attracted the elite in nearby Ottawa. Many large "country" houses were built in Rockcliffe after the area was connected to Ottawa by streetcar in 1891. Stornoway, named after a town on the Hebridean Isle of Lewis, was one of these houses.



Stornoway was built in 1913 by Ascanio Joseph Major, who controlled one of the largest wholesaling grocery enterprises in eastern Canada. He hired Allan Keefer, a noted architect of the day, to prepare the design. In 1923, the Perley-Robertsons, another distinguished local family, bought the house and enlarged it over the next few years.

- **A royal exile**

Following the invasion of the Netherlands by the German army on May 10, 1940, the Dutch royal family went into exile. Princess Juliana, the heir to Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, was sent with her husband and children to the safety of Canada.

The royal exiles lived first at Rideau Hall and then in a small, overcrowded house in Rockcliffe. In 1941, Mrs. Perley-Robertson came to the rescue, and offered Princess Juliana the loan of Stornoway. The princess and her family and friends moved in during the summer of 1941. It was to Stornoway that Princess Juliana brought home her third child in 1943.

- **Official residence of Canada's leader of the Opposition**

In 1946, Senator Grattan O'Leary launched a campaign to find a home for the leader of the Opposition. He raised funds among friends and associates in Ottawa, set up a trust fund, and began to shop for a suitable property. The Perley-Robertsons offered Stornoway to the trust at a discount price of \$55,000.

Conservative leader George Drew (former premier of Ontario) and his wife were the first residents (1950-1956), followed in 1958 by Lester and Marion Pearson. Since then, Stornoway has been home to a succession of political families – the Diefenbakers, the Stanfields, the Clarks, and many others – continuing to this day.

Hint for finding this location on the Giant Floor Map

- This historic landmark can be found just northeast of the circle on the main map that surrounds the downtown core. Once you find Rockcliffe Park, look for an "official residence" icon (see legend).



6. OFFICIAL RESIDENCE CARDS

24 Sussex Drive

The house at 24 Sussex Drive is the official residence of Canada's prime minister.

Part of the house is reserved for the use of the family. The other part is where the prime minister welcomes official guests for public functions. These rooms are decorated and furnished in keeping with their important public function. The residence is designated as a "classified" heritage building by the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office.

This residence is closed to the public.



History

- **A place for the political elite**

The house was built in 1868. Its first three owners were prominent figures, successful businessmen, and members of Parliament. From early on, it has welcomed the political elite of Canada. Purchased by the federal government, the house was refurbished as an official residence for the prime minister in 1950.

- **Place of peace**

In the early 19th century, Canada was a magnet for young, ambitious immigrants. One of them was young Joseph Merrill Currier from Vermont, United States. He came to Ottawa in 1837 at age 17 and stayed to make a fortune in the lumber trade. In 1868, as a wedding gift to his third wife, Hannah, he built a house near the forests and water that had made his fortune. He called the house Gorffwysfa, which means "place of peace" in Welsh.

- **Politics and business**

After the death of Hannah Currier in 1901, the house passed into the hands of William Cameron Edwards, a member of another prominent lumbering family. Like the first owner, Edwards was both a successful businessman and a prominent politician. From 1893 onwards, his company owned all the mills east of Rideau Falls, and he turned them into an important wood-manufacturing complex. Edwards also served as a member of Parliament from 1891 to 1900, after which he was appointed senator.

- **Expropriation**

In 1950, a decision was finally made to refurbish the property as an official residence for the prime minister. This was the era of rampant "modernism" and, during the renovations, many Victorian features of the house – both inside and out – were removed, including bay windows, wood panelling, several fine fireplaces, and elaborate wooden trim.

- **Official life**

The last thing Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent wanted in 1950 was an official residence. St. Laurent finally consented to move in, as long as he could continue to pay rent (a practice that continued until 1971). Since then, the house has been occupied by a succession of government leaders, including John Diefenbaker, Lester B. Pearson, and Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

Hint for finding this location on the Giant Floor Map

- Look for Confederation Boulevard (see legend) and follow it to its most northern point. The location you are looking for will have an "official residence" icon (see legend).



6. OFFICIAL RESIDENCE CARDS

The Farm

The Farm has been the official residence of the speaker of the House of Commons since 1955. It is a quiet place where the speaker of the House of Commons can retreat from the political activity of Parliament. The National Capital Commission has managed this residence since 1988.

This rural property is located at Kingsmere, in the Gatineau Hills. It consists of a renovated farmhouse and five outbuildings, surrounded by 1.74 hectares (4 acres) of fields and forests.

This residence is closed to the public.

History

- **A family property**

The Farm was built in the mid-19th century by Henry Fleury, a pioneer who settled at Kingsmere with his family. Their farm property included a farmhouse, several outbuildings, fields, forests, and a disused mica mine. In 1927, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King bought the land. He transformed it into a distinguished property as part of his country estate.

- **A prime minister's retreat**

In 1935, King decided to renovate the farmhouse as a year-round country retreat. He built two new wings and introduced heating and indoor plumbing. In the 1940s, King made the Farm his preferred country getaway, calling it his "real home."

- **A national legacy**

After his retirement in 1948, William Lyon Mackenzie King spent an increasing amount of time at the Farm. It was also there that he died, on July 22, 1950. King left his entire 231-hectare Kingsmere country estate, including the Farm, to the government and people of Canada. In his will, King expressed the wish that most of his estate become a public park. Indeed, the Mackenzie King Estate is now a centrepiece of Gatineau Park. The former prime minister also wished that his successors use the Farm as a retreat where they could escape the pressures of public life, as he had done. Since Harrington Lake had been chosen for the prime minister, the Farm became the official residence of the speaker of the House of Commons.



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Hint for finding this location on the Giant Floor Map

- This historic site can be found within Gatineau Park. If you look for an "official residence" icon (see legend) just northwest of the Gatineau Park label, you should find this location.