



6.0 Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

A “Statement of Cultural Heritage Value” is the foundation of all heritage conservation district plans. The statement below is based on the original statement in the 1997 Rockcliffe HCD Study but has been shortened and adapted in consultation with the author of the original Rockcliffe Park study to reflect the current requirements of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value and Heritage Attributes

Rockcliffe Park is a rare and significant approach to estate layout and landscape design adapted to Canada’s natural landscape from 18th century English precedents. Originally purchased from the Crown by Thomas McKay, it was laid out according to the principles of the Picturesque tradition in a series of “Park and Villa” lots by his son-in-law Thomas Keefer in 1864. The historical associations of the village with the McKay/Keefer family, who were influential in the economic, social, cultural and political development of Ottawa continue and the heritage conservation district is a testament to the ideas and initiatives of various key members of this extended family, and their influence in shaping this area.



Rockcliffe Park today is a remarkably consistent reflection of Keefer's original design intentions. Although development of the residential lots has taken place very gradually, the ideas of estate management, of individual lots as part of a larger whole, of Picturesque design, of residential focus, have survived. This continuity of vision is very rare in a community where development has occurred on a relatively large scale over such a long time period.



The preservation of the natural landscape, the deliberately curved roads, lined with mature trees, and without curbs or sidewalks, the careful landscaping of the public spaces and corridors, together with the strong landscaping of the individual properties, create the apparently casual and informal style so integral to the Picturesque tradition. The preservation and enhancement of topographical features including the lake and pond, the internal ridges and slopes, and the various rock outcroppings, has reinforced the original design intentions. The views to and from the Ottawa River, the Beechwood escarpment, and the other park areas are integral to the Picturesque quality of Rockcliffe Park. Beechwood Cemetery and the Rockeries serve as a compatible landscaped boundary from the earliest period of settlement through to the present. The various border lands create important gateways to the area, and help establish its particular character.



The architectural design of the buildings and associated institutional facilities is similarly deliberate and careful, and reflects the casual elegance and asymmetry of the English country revival styles, such as the Georgian Revival, Tudor Revival and Arts and Crafts. Many of the houses were designed by architects in these styles. The generosity of space around the houses, and the flow of this

space from one property to the next by continuous planting rather than hard fence lines, has maintained the estate qualities and park setting envisioned by Keefer.

Statement of Heritage Attributes

The Rockcliffe Park Heritage Conservation District comprises the entire former village of Rockcliffe Park, an independent municipality until amalgamation with the City of Ottawa in 2001. Section 41.1 (5) c of the *Ontario Heritage Act* requires the Heritage District Plan to include a “description of the heritage attributes of the

heritage conservation district and of properties in the district.” A “Heritage Survey Form” outlining the heritage attributes for every property in the HCD has been compiled and evaluated. The forms are held on file with the City of Ottawa.

Description of Heritage Attributes

The attributes of the Rockcliffe Park HCD are:

- The natural features that distinguish the HCD, including McKay lake and its shoreline, the varied terrain, and topography;
- The unobtrusive siting of the houses on streets and the generous spacing relative to the neighbouring buildings;
- The variety of mature street trees and the dense forested character that they create;
- The profusion of trees, hedges, and shrubs on private property;
- Varied lot sizes and irregularly shaped lots;
- Generous spacing and setbacks of the buildings;
- Cedar hedges planted to demarcate property lines and to create privacy;
- The dominance of soft landscaping over hard landscaping;
- Wide publicly-owned verges;
- The remaining Villa lots laid out in McKay’s original plan;
- The high concentration of buildings by architect Allan Keefer, including 725 and 741 Acacia, 11 Crescent Road;
- The rich mix of buildings types and styles from all eras, with the Tudor Revival and Georgian Revival styles forming a large proportion of the total building stock;
- The predominance of stucco and stone houses over and the relative rarity of brick buildings;
- The narrow width of many streets, such as McKinnon and Kinzua Roads;



- The historic road pattern that still reflects the original design established by Thomas Keefer;
- The low, dry stone walls in certain areas of the Village, including around Ashbury College;
- The existing garden features that enhance the public realm and distinguish certain private properties, including the garden gate at 585 Manor Ave, and the white picket fence at 190 Coltrin Road;
- Informal landscape character with simple walkways, driveways, stone retaining walls and flowerbeds;
- The “dog walk,” a public footpath that extends from Old Prospect Road to corner of Lansdowne Road and Mariposa Avenue;



- The public open spaces including the Village Green and its associated Jubilee Garden;
- Institutional and recreational buildings including the three schools, Rockcliffe Park Public School, Ashbury College and Elmwood School for Girls and the Rockcliffe Park Tennis Club;
- The significant amenities of the Caldwell-Carver Conservation Area, McKay Lake and the Pond,
- The multi-unit buildings, small lots, and more modest houses in the area bounded by Oakhill to the east, Beechwood to the south, and Acacia to the west and north, referred to as the “Panhandle,” that characterize the south and west boundaries of the District.
- The regular front yard setbacks on some streets such as Sir Guy Carleton Street, Blenheim Drive and Birch Avenue
- The irregular front yard setbacks on some streets, such as Mariposa Avenue between Springfield and Lisgar Roads, Crescent Road, Acacia Avenue and Buena Vista between Springfield and Cloverdale Roads