



Research Report

South Field Buildings, Oshawa Executive Airport
(Stores Building and Canteen)
1000 Stevenson Road North
Oshawa, ON

Prepared for Heritage Oshawa
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Includes research Su Murdoch completed in 2002

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Introduction

i. Purpose of Report

This report evaluates the cultural heritage significance of two buildings located at the South Field of the Oshawa Executive Airport, 1000 Stevenson Road North, in the City of Oshawa in accordance with Ontario Regulation 9/06, Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest.

The purpose of this undertaking is to determine whether the subject property merits designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* (the Act).

ii. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Ontario Regulation 9/06 under the Ontario Heritage Act sets out the criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest, which is required in order to designate a property under the provisions of Part IV of the Act.

A property may be designated under Section 29 of the Act if it meets one or more of the following criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest.

1. The property has design value or physical value because it:
 - i. is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method,
 - ii. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit, or
 - iii. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.
2. The property has historical value or associative value because it,
 - i. has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community,
 - ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture, or
 - iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.
3. The property has contextual value because it,
 - i. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area,
 - ii. is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings, or
 - iii. is a landmark.

After analyzing the history and heritage attributes of the two buildings, it is concluded that the subject buildings merit designation under the Ontario Heritage Act in light of criteria 1 (i), 2 (i) and 3 (i, ii).

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

i. Location

The Oshawa Executive Airport, South Field Buildings are located at 1000 Stevenson Road North, in the City of Oshawa. Figure 1 indicates the location of the Oshawa Executive Airport and the two areas commonly known as the “North Field” and the “South Field”. The South Field Buildings are two of the original buildings constructed in the winter of 1940-41 and were a part of a larger complex of buildings that was constructed to support the No. 20 Elementary Flying Training School, part of Canada’s contribution to the war effort in World War II. Included in this complex is another original building - No. 10 Building (currently being used by the No. 420 Wing R.C.A.F. Association (420 Wing)).

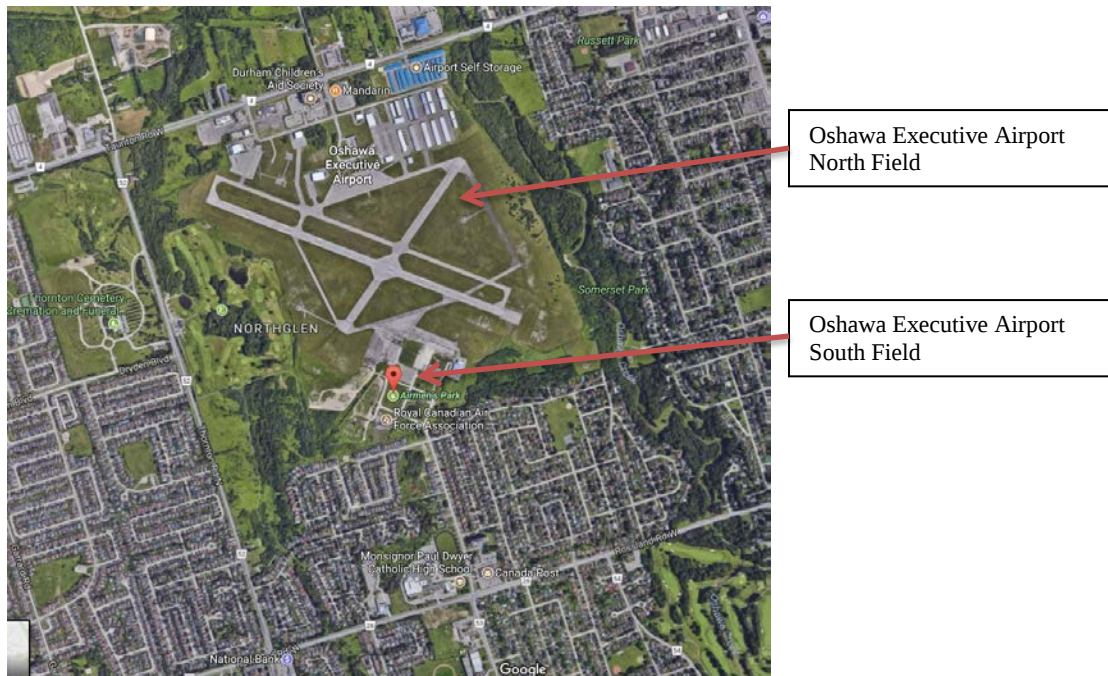


Figure 1 – Google Map, showing the location Oshawa Executive Airport and South Field Buildings. 2017

ii. Legal Description

The South Field Buildings, Oshawa Executive Airport, are located at 1000 Stevenson Road North, Part of Lots 12-16, Concession 3, East Whitby Township, now the City of Oshawa.

iii. Site Description

The South Field Buildings are located east of the No. 10 Building. These buildings were originally part of the No. 20 Elementary Flying Training School. The participation of local flying clubs in the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) was key to the training of 73,000 Canadians during World War II and the eventual success of the Allied Forces. These two buildings, owned by the City of Oshawa, are two of the original buildings dating to the first period of construction activity in the winter of 1940-1941. Currently one of the buildings, the south building, is used by the Ontario Regiment R.C.A.C. Regimental Museum as a tank hangar. The other building, the north building, is leased to the Oshawa Yacht Club.



Figure 2 – Google Map, Oshawa Executive Airport South Field Buildings, 1000 Stevenson Road North, Oshawa, ON. 2017

Historical Context

i. Summary

The participation of local flying clubs in the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan was key to the training of about 73,000 Canadians during the World War II. The buildings were constructed in 1941 to accommodate the No. 20 Elementary Flying Training School (E.F.T.S), representing Oshawa's participation in this aspect of the war effort. The two buildings that are the subject of this report, are two of the original buildings dating to the first period of construction activity in the winter of 1940-41. These two buildings are currently owned by the

City of Oshawa. The north building is currently used by the Oshawa Yacht Club. This building served as a canteen before it was converted into a classroom and office in 1947. The south building was used as a storage building and is currently used by the Ontario Regiment R.C.A.C. Regimental Museum today to store tanks. Currently there are no Armed Forces present at the airport site. The Airport is divided into north and south fields, with separate access. The location is popular for commercial filmmaking and is home to the Ontario Regiment R.C.A.C. Regimental Museum located to the south and west of the buildings. The subject buildings appear to be in stable condition.

ii. Early Lot History

On September 3, 1939, Britain and France declared war on Germany. Canada followed on September 10 and immediately began preparing for its role as a member of the Allied Forces. On December 17, 1939, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand signed an agreement to participate in the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan to train pilots, navigators, gunners, bomb aimers, flight engineers, air crew, ground crew and support staff. Over the next five years approximately 131,553 airmen were trained and graduated to Wings Standard 1 in Canada. According to David J Broughton in his 1994 publication *History of Oshawa Airport*:

Flying Clubs across Canada were asked to train pilots to the R.C.A.F.(Royal Canadian Air Force) standard to support Canada's need for pilots for wartime requirements. Contracts were offered to all active Canadian Flying Clubs. Each would form a company under the Dominion Companies Act, and would provide their own capital for entering into a training contract with the Crown. An agreement was signed December 17th, 1939, with the R.A.F delegates on behalf of Great Britain, and then the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) became a reality in Canada.

Oshawa businessman Alexander G. Storie, President and General Manager of Fittings Ltd., assisted by George Hart, Haydon McDonald, Samuel Trees and T.K. Creighton, organized the Ontario County Flying Training School. The Brantford and Kingston Flying Clubs added \$5000 each to the fundraising campaign headed by Robson Leather Co. Ltd. owner, Charles Robson. The three clubs established No. 20 Elementary Flying Training School (E.F.T.S) under the model of the BCATP. Robson became the first manager of the School.

The obvious drawback to the success of the E.F.T.S. was the lack of airport facilities in the Oshawa area. That changed in 1940. Earth movers arrived in the fall of 1940 to demolish the existing farm buildings and level two hills and a cultivated field. Several new structures were standing even before March 20, 1941, when the federal government finalized the expropriation for airport use of Lot 15, Concession 3, East Whitby Township. Other expropriations and purchases followed, until the site reached its current 198.68 hectares (490.95 acres).

Civil engineers and labourers rapidly planned and constructed hangers, runways, barracks, roadways and the infrastructure required to open the airport and No. 20 E.F.T. School. The first plane arrived in June 1941. Twelve months later, the opening ceremony was officiated by the Duke of Kent. Alexander Storie was appointed E.F.T.S. President.

During the war period, approximately 2,500 student pilots completed the basic flying training course at Oshawa. Every six weeks, two classes graduated sixty students each. Large H-shaped barracks were built over several years to accommodate the enlisted and other personnel. (See Broughton, p2)

The Ontario County Flying Training School was acknowledged by several awards for their efficiency, including the Cock of the Walk trophy awarded to Oshawa in 1944 as the “best training station in Canada”. November 1944 saw the last graduating class of pilots at Oshawa.

Following Germany’s surrender in May 1945:

The airport became a storage base and clearing house for the War Assets Corporation and the Royal Canadian Flying Clubs Association.....The R.C.A.F. closed the airport in the spring of 1945, and turned the operation over to the Department of Transport. The buildings and aircraft were declared war surplus by the government. (Broughton, p3)

iii Postwar Activities

On February 18, 1944, the Directorate of No. 20 E.F.T.S. received a charter or special Letters Patent as a Flying Club. With the war still unsettled, there was no initiative to organize the Club until the Spring of 1945. A gathering at the Hotel Genosha in downtown Oshawa led to the August 16, 1945 formation of a management committee for the Oshawa branch of the Royal Canadian Flying Clubs Association.

Haydon McDonald (chairperson), W.O. (Bill) Hart, E.G. Storie, K.D. Smith and George Hurren (who became manager of the Flying Club and the airport) immediately negotiated with the federal government. The annual rent was one dollar plus maintenance, taxes and insurance. Among the buildings leased by the Club were the Recreational Hall, No. 10 Building and No. 1 Hangar. In spite of setbacks, by August 31, 1945, “the business of flying on a club basis began,” and on September 15 the Ontario County Flying Club opened. From its opening the Club had the financial and physical responsibility for all airport plant and operations.

Several commercial operations leased, or eventually bought, other buildings on site. In late 1945, Weston Aircraft opened an aircraft maintenance shop in the south half of Hangar No. 1. The building was purchased in 1947 by Photographic Survey, the name was changed to Field Aviation in 1948. It operated at Oshawa until 1960 when it relocated to Toronto airport (Malton, now Pearson International). Bob Kashower, owner of Kashower Aviation, bought war

surplus aircraft and had Weston convert them for civilian use. Bob lived in a trailer on site and had his office at the top of the control tower building from 1946 to 1950.

Following extensive negotiations with the federal government, the City of Oshawa took over the management of the airport in 1947. Also that year, Air Cadet flying training began under the sponsorship of the Air Cadet League with financial support of the Department of National Defense. The Oshawa Air Cadets chose the name Chadburn Squadron in recognition of the decorated Canadian fighter pilot and young R.C.A.F. Wing Commander, Lloyd V. Chadburn. An array of other private and corporate endeavours at the Oshawa Executive Airport are documented in David J. Broughton's 1994 *History of Oshawa Airport*.

Since 1947 the two South Field Buildings (subject of this report) have been used at one time or another by the Ontario Regiment. These two buildings were associated with the former BCATP. After World War II the Regiment required new facilities for training. The one building that had been the canteen, served as a classroom, this is the north building. There was lack of office space and classroom space at the downtown armoury and this building allowed the armoured and reconnaissance squadrons their own facility.

In April 1949, No. 420 Wing of the Royal Canadian Air Force Association was organized and held its first meeting in November. The No. 420 Wing is a volunteer organization. Its mandate was to ensure a strong Air Force and assist with other aviation matters such as airports and Air Cadet training. The directors of the Flying Club gave No. 420 Wing permission to use the south half of No. 10 Building for their monthly meetings. The building is still used by the No. 420 Wing today.

In 1977, Robert Stuart opened a private museum called the *Robert Stuart Aeronautical and Camp-X Museum* in the former Stores building and it served as a museum until 2010. When this museum closed, the Ontario Regiment R.C.A.C. Regimental Museum made use of the Stores building as a tank hangar and vehicle compound for additional storage for their extensive collection of historical military vehicles.

iv Current Status

Today there is no Armed Forces presence at the South Field of the Oshawa Executive Airport. The Flying Club closed in 1998. The airport is divided into what is commonly known as the "North Field" and the "South Field", each with their own separate access. Flight training, air ambulance, passenger charter services, freight services, aerial police operations, aircraft maintenance and aircraft restoration services are all provided at the airport. The location is popular for filmmaking and is home to the Ontario Regiment R.C.A.C. Regimental Museum which host the popular Tank Saturdays and Tank Ride Program throughout the spring and summer months. Today, one of the South Field Buildings is used by the Ontario Regiment Ferret Club, a part of the Ontario Regiment R.C.A.C. Regimental Museum, for storage of a portion of its extensive historical military vehicle collection. A war surplus Sabre aircraft is the focal point of Airmen's Park, a park that contains a plaque and relics commemorating the site's history. The buildings that are the subject of this report appear to be in stable condition. The

south building (Stores) has had some restoration work completed whereas the north building (Canteen) directly behind the No. 10 Building (No. 420 Wing) still has the original cedar shingle cladding. The former Canteen is currently leased by the Oshawa Yacht Club. Without certain necessary work done to the building it will deteriorate to an unstable condition.

Structural Design and Architecture

i. Date of Construction

Under pressure to open the airport and Flying School as part of the war effort, buildings at the Oshawa site were erected quickly. The initial construction activities in 1940-1941 were followed by a second phase from September 1943 into 1944. The buildings that are the subject of this report, were part of the first phase of construction.

ii. Form and Design

The buildings were intended to serve a specific purpose for a life span of not more than twenty years. All were of frame construction and primarily clad in wood shingle siding and painted dark green. The two buildings that are the subject of this report, have undergone some restoration work. The north building (Canteen) is clad in the original cedar shingles and the south building (Stores currently used for tank storage) is currently clad in wood clapboard. Both buildings have modest entryways. The former Stores building features a large door, that is a later addition, on the west elevation where tanks enter and exit the building.

iii. Construction Materials

Original cladding was cedar shingles on both the north and south buildings. The south building (Stores) is currently clad in wood planks and the north building (Canteen) still features the original cedar shingle cladding. Both buildings feature asphalt shingles on the roofs.

iv. Foundation

The north building (Canteen) features a cement block and post foundation with wood floor. The south building (Stores) has a cement slab foundation.

v. Roof

Both the south and north buildings feature a medium pitch gabled roof with asphalt shingles which would have originally been cedar shingles.

vi. Window Openings

The window openings in the south building (Stores) feature small one by one pane windows located only on the north facades. The south building (Stores) features six over six pane windows.

Applicability of Ontario Regulation 9/06 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*

In light of the findings of this report, it is concluded that two buildings in this report known as the South Field Buildings at the Oshawa Executive Airport meet several of the criteria outlined in Ontario Regulation 9/06. The property meets the criteria for designation prescribed by the Province of Ontario under the three categories of 1. Design or physical value, 2. Historical/associative value and 3. Contextual value.

- 1(i) The design/physical value of the Canteen building is defined by its representation of the war years' construction methods and materials: specifically the original cedar shingle siding and the original 6 over 6 pane windows. It demonstrates the quick construction and temporary nature intended for "war-time construction".
- 1(i) The former Canteen and Stores buildings feature long rectangular, single storey wood frame construction structures with medium pitched gable roofs, with the exterior painted in a dark green colour.
- 2(i) The property has direct association with the Oshawa Executive Airport.
- 2(i) The South Field Buildings have direct association with the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan known as No. 20 Elementary Flying School.
- 3 (i) South Field Buildings are important in defining, maintaining and supporting the area in which they stand because they reflect the important role Oshawa played during the war effort.
- 3 (ii) The former Canteen and Stores buildings are physically and visually linked to their surroundings due to the location of these two buildings in relation to several public and institutional buildings. These buildings include the No. 10 Building (currently used by the No. 420 Wing R.C.A.F. Association), Oshawa Executive Airport, Airmen's Park featuring a war surplus Sabre aircraft and historic plaque.

Proposed Designation Statement and Description

Should Council agree that designation of the former Canteen and Stores buildings, also known as the South Field Buildings of the Oshawa Executive Airport, is appropriate, it is recommended that the following Designation Statement and Description be incorporated into the designation by-law.

i. Description of Property

The former Canteen and Stores buildings are located at the South Field of the Oshawa Executive Airport at 1000 Stevenson Road North, Part of Lots 12-16, Concession 3, East Whitby Township, now the City of Oshawa.

ii. Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The cultural heritage value of the South Field Buildings is linked to the participation of local flying clubs in the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan that was key to the training of 73,000 Canadians during World War II and the success of the Allied Forces. The former Canteen and Stores buildings, constructed in 1941 in support of opening an airport and accommodating the No. 20 Elementary Flying Training School (E.F.T.S), represent part of Oshawa's participation in this aspect of the war effort.

The cultural heritage value of the former Canteen and Stores buildings lies in their design and context within the overall British Commonwealth Air Training complex and the original architectural features of these remaining South Field Buildings that were constructed during World War II in 1941. Both buildings feature long rectangular, single storey frame structures with medium pitched gable roofs. Original cedar shingle siding appears on the former Canteen building. The former Stores building has wood plank siding that has replaced the original cedar shingle siding.

The South Field Buildings remain on the same location where they were originally built and are historically, visually and functionally linked to their setting. The former Stores building is currently used by the Ontario Regiment R.C.A.C. Regimental Museum and is one of the original buildings dating to the first period of construction activity in the winter of 1940/41 when the site was the location of the No. 20 Elementary Flying Club to support the war effort in World War II. These buildings should be maintained as part of a grouping of original buildings that survive on the site today, including the No. 10 Building (No. 420 Wing). Just south of the buildings is Airmen's Park featuring a war surplus Sabre aircraft, the focal point of the parkette and historical plaques. There is a plaque in the park that reads:

Sabre 23047, This Canadair Mark Sabre Jet, painted in the colours of the 416 "City of Oshawa" SQN., is dedicated, by grateful citizens of Oshawa

and district, to all allied airmen who served their country in the cause of freedom.

iii. Description of Heritage Attributes

Key attributes that express the cultural heritage value of the former Canteen and Stores buildings at the South Field of the Oshawa Executive Airport as an example of the No. 20 Elementary Flying School complex constructed to support Canada's effort as an ally during World War II include:

- The original rectangular, single-storey design and wood frame construction with medium-pitched gable roofs of both the former Canteen and Stores buildings
- The original cedar shingle cladding on the former Canteen (north) building
- The original six-over-six pane windows on the former Stores building (south)
- The location of the former Canteen and Stores buildings in proximity and placement relative to each other and the No. 10 Building (No.420 Wing)

Resources

Conveyances Abstract. *Durham Land Registry Office*

Broughton, David J. "The History of the Oshawa Airport". *Flying News*, June 27, 1994

"History made at the airport: Organization wants special designation for airport." *Oshawa This Week*, December 3, 1997

Airport Files. Oshawa Archives

Email with Jeremy Blower, Executive Director, Ontario Regiment R.C.A.C Museum

Henderson, Rod. *150 Years: History of the Ontario Regiment*. 2016

Murdoch, Su. Heritage Research Report: *No. 10 Building – Oshawa Airport*, 1000 Stevenson Road North, Oshawa. 2003

Plot Plan of Airport Site in 1941 and 1943, Sketched by Bill Cox, May 2002

Websites/Blogs

<http://militarybruce.com/abandoned-canadian-military-bases/abandoned-bases/ontario/>

Current Photographs of the Property – Taken June 2017



1. South Field Buildings at the Oshawa Executive Airport, former Stores Building (left) and Canteen (right), circa 1941.



2. East Facade, Former Canteen Building, featuring original cedar shingle cladding and 6 over 6 windows.



3. South Facade, Former Canteen. Entranceway and 6 windows featuring 6 over 6 paned windows.



4. North and West Facade, Former Canteen.



5. Close up of original cedar shingle cladding on the former Canteen building.



6. East Facade, Former Stores Building



7. South Facade, Former Stores Building



8. West Facade, Former Stores Building



9. North Facade and Vehicle Compound, Former Stores Building



10. Airmen's Park, Oshawa Executive Airport, 1000 Stevenson Road North, Oshawa, ON

Historic Photos of the Property



1. Former Robert Stuart Aeronautical and Camp-X Museum, 2004 (referred to in this report as the former Stores Building)



2. Ontario Regiment using the Canteen as extra classroom space. After 1947
Photo: Ontario Regiment RCAC Museum Collection, File 0220

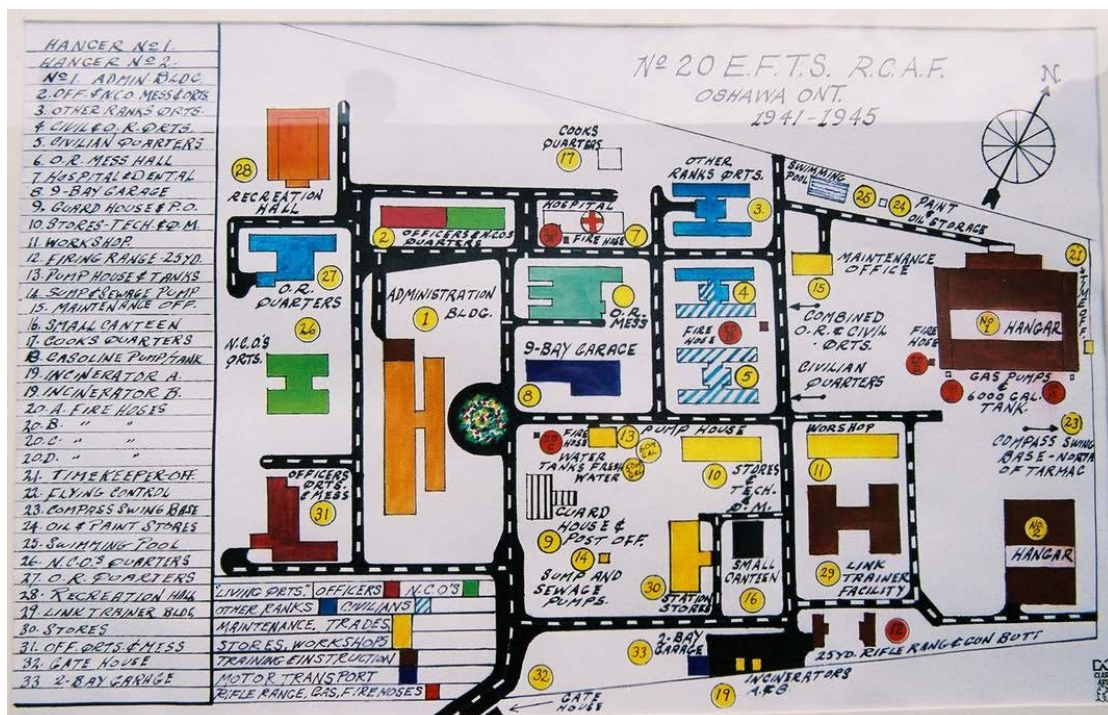


3. South Building, Canteen and Classroom,
Photo Courtesy: Ontario Regiment RCAC Museum , File 0207



4. Ontario Regiment training on the grounds surrounding the South Field Buildings at the Oshawa Executive Airport.

Photo: Ontario Regiment RCAC Museum Collection



5. No. 20 Elementary Flying Training School Station Map, Bruce Forsyth, 2004