

# Government House and the Fanningbank Estate

## A Handbook for Guides

Reginald Porter



Government House Committee  
Government House  
Charlottetown  
2017

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### ***Acknowledgements***

The author wishes to acknowledge the kind assistance of their Honours, Lieutenant Governor Frank and Dorothy Lewis in finding time to discuss aspects of their life at Government House and providing him with entry, from time to time, for study and photography. We also wish to thank Her Honour, Mrs. Lewis, for the time she spent proofreading this Handbook and providing new information on past Royal visits. The Government House staff have made it possible to explore all parts of the house and have provided access to the in-house archives, resulting in the 2015 report, *Government House and the Fanningbank Estate: A Guidebook*. The author is also grateful to volunteer guide, Laurent Beaulieu, who helped clarify the nature of guide reference material that is desirable at this time.

We are grateful to the PEI Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal for up-to-date plans of Government House as well as Confederation Centre Art Gallery, the PEI Museum and the Public Archives and Records office for permission to use illustrative material from their collections. All other illustrative materials are from the Reg Porter collection. The list of Governors and Royal Visits appended at the end are taken from the existing notes for guides.

Reg Porter volunteered to write this handbook, focussed on Government House, as a celebration of the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Isaac Smith's arrival in Prince Edward Island in 1817.

The cover illustration is a watercolour of Government House attributed to Caroline Louisa Daly, circa 1857. CCAG.

## **Table of Contents**

Note to the Guides	4
Sequence of the Tour	5
The Home of the Lieutenant Governor of PEI	7
The Fanningbank Estate	8
The Fanningbank Gardens	10
Government House and its Builder	12
The Saloon – now called the Entrance Hall	19
The East Side for the Affairs of the Governor	22
The West Side for Formal Public Entertainment	26
The Drawing Room – now called the Receiving Room	27
The Centre Drawing Room – now called the Garden Room	29
The Dining Room	31
The Grand or Ceremonial Staircase and Palladian Window	33
The Gallery or Upstairs Hall	35
The West Suite of Rooms – Second Floor	37
The South Suite of Rooms – Second Floor	39
The East Suite of Rooms – Second Floor	40
The Private Areas	41
Appendix I – Governors and Lieutenant Governors of P.E.I.	42
Appendix II – Royal Visits to Government House	51
Bibliography	54

## Note to the Guides



The year 2017 marks the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the arrival of Isaac Smith, the architect of Government House, on Prince Edward Island. As part of the celebrations for this event Government House and the Government House Committee are providing the Volunteer Guides with a new handbook to assist in the interpretation of the House during guided tours.

As before, there will be emphasis placed on the two major functions that take place in these spaces where the Lieutenant Governor has his office as representative of Her Majesty the Queen and where the various social occasions connected with this office take place. Visitors will also have an opportunity to study and appreciate Isaac Smith's imposing and elegant structure, examine what remains of the original furnishings along with the furniture and artworks that now decorate the House.

## Sequence of the Tour

When time, season and weather permit the tour could begin outside Government House, in front of the south portico, where it would be possible to point out features in the landscape that pertain to the history of the Fanningbank estate and its gardens.

Using the various section notes in this handbook,

1. Give a very brief history of the estate, its features and evolution (**optional**);
2. Make visitors aware that the House is surrounded by gardens, in various formats, that are constantly evolving (**optional**);
3. Introduce visitors to the builder of Government House, Isaac Smith, giving a bit of his history and explaining how this style of house came to be built;
4. Enter the house and gather in the Entrance Hall (Saloon) and explain that it is a privilege to be admitted to the private home of the Lieutenant Governor who, as representative of Her Royal Majesty the Queen, is a person whose existence is vital to the functioning of the Provincial Legislature. Go on to explain the features and functions of the Hall as described;
5. Point out that the House is divided into two halves, one for official business the other for the social aspects of the Office. Describe the east or official part of the House with the Governor's Office;
6. Explore the west side of the house whose rooms – the Receiving Room (Drawing Room), Garden Room and Dining Room – are set aside for the social activities associated with the office of the Lieutenant Governor;
7. Moving to the grand staircase explain its function as a stage for the pageant of the Lieutenant Governor's activities. Explain also the light-providing function of the huge Palladian window;
8. Examine the Gallery as a unique architectural feature in Island architecture, creating a very dynamic transition to the upper floor and a place for visitors to observe large pleasurable assemblies below. It also provides access to all the bedrooms;

9. Discuss the west side of the Gallery or upstairs hall with the rooms set aside after 1970 as a Royal Suite to accommodate members of the Royal Family, should they visit;
10. Point out the south side of the Gallery, identifying the suite of rooms reserved for the Lieutenant Governor;
11. Discuss the east side of the Gallery with its two additional bedrooms and mention how this side of the house was damaged and modified when it served as a military hospital at the end of World War I;
12. Point out that the former servants' wings are now used for kitchens, additional working office spaces for the Lieutenant Governor and as private domestic spaces for the use of the Governor's family.
13. Re-assemble in the Entrance Hall to end the tour.

## **The Home of the Lieutenant Governor of PEI**

Government House is the official residence of the Lieutenant Governor of Prince Edward Island. It is his/her home and place of work. It is a great privilege for visitors to be welcomed into this grand and elegant house to explore the official rooms with their contents that reflect the heritage of the House and of the Province. The following information about the Lieutenant Governor's duties has been provided by Government House:

The Lieutenant Governor is The Queen's personal representative in the province. In the original Canadian colonies, the Governor was to carry out instructions from London on behalf of "The Crown". In times past, law-making powers used to be a Crown prerogative. With the adoption of the concept of Responsible Government elected by the people since 1851, the powers to write and pass Laws are transferred to the Legislature. The Lieutenant Governor now has Reserve Powers, "To consult, to advise and to warn," and in the modern era, they have been rarely exercised. The Crown entrusts its power to the elected government. The Lieutenant Governor still has a role, because no bill or Executive Council Order becomes law until it is signed by the Queen's representative as part of his or her official duties.

Included in the Lieutenant Governor's other official duties are the swearing in of the Premier, the Cabinet, presiding over the opening and closing of the Legislature and reading the Speech from the Throne. Also, the Lieutenant Governor officially greets visiting dignitaries including members of the Royal Family, visiting diplomats and politicians.

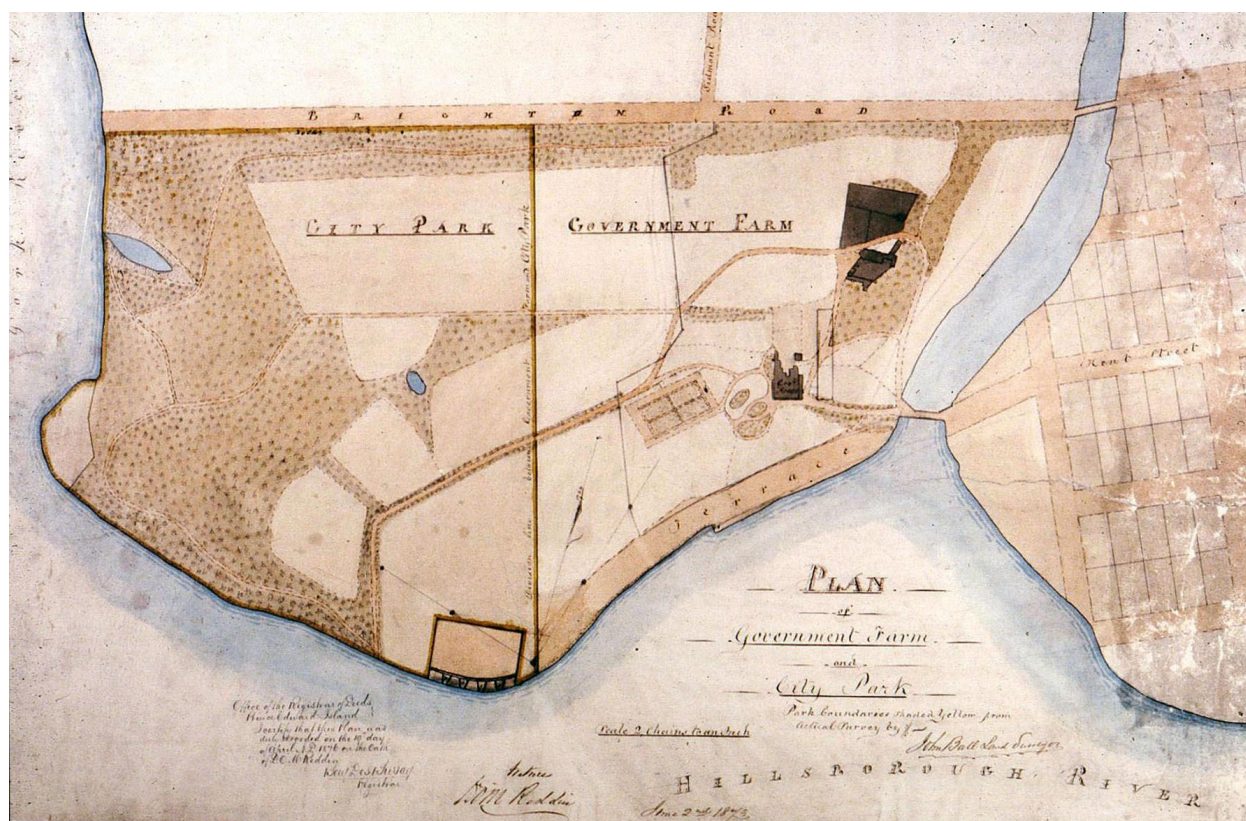
The Lieutenant Governor has ceremonial duties, attending or hosting hundreds of events, celebrations, dinners, award presentations, school assemblies, and more. The Lieutenant Governor often presents medals and awards on behalf of The Queen or the Governor General of Canada, or organizations that have received Vice-Regal patronage, thus making the Lieutenant Governor an honorary patron.

At official events, both in Government House and out of house, the Lieutenant Governor is accompanied by an Aide-de-Camp, who can be a uniformed officer of the Canadian military, RCMP, municipal police or fire services.



## The Fanningbank Estate

In 1789 Governor Edmund Fanning set aside about 88 acres of land originally reserved for the expansion of Charlottetown to be used as an estate for future Governors. This included all the land south of Brighton Road that now makes up Victoria Park and the present Fanningbank estate.



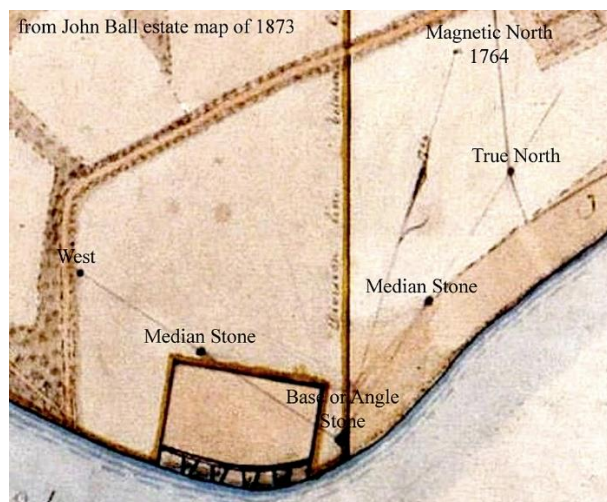
This map, by surveyor John Ball drawn in 1873, shows all the geographical features of the Fanningbank estate and Victoria Park. (PARO).

Long before a house was built for the Governors the land would be encroached upon for other purposes:

1. In the late 1790s the military built a platform with cannon called a battery to defend the harbour from attacking ships. It is still there in a modified form and is called Fort Edward today;

2. In the early 1800s a bridge was built over a salty inlet where Spring Park drained into the harbour. Later a dam was added to create Government Pond;

3. In 1820 and again in 1846 stone markers were set up in the battery for surveyors to adjust their instruments to True North. They can still be seen today;



4. In the 1820s there was a small farm on the property and the clearing of land was begun;

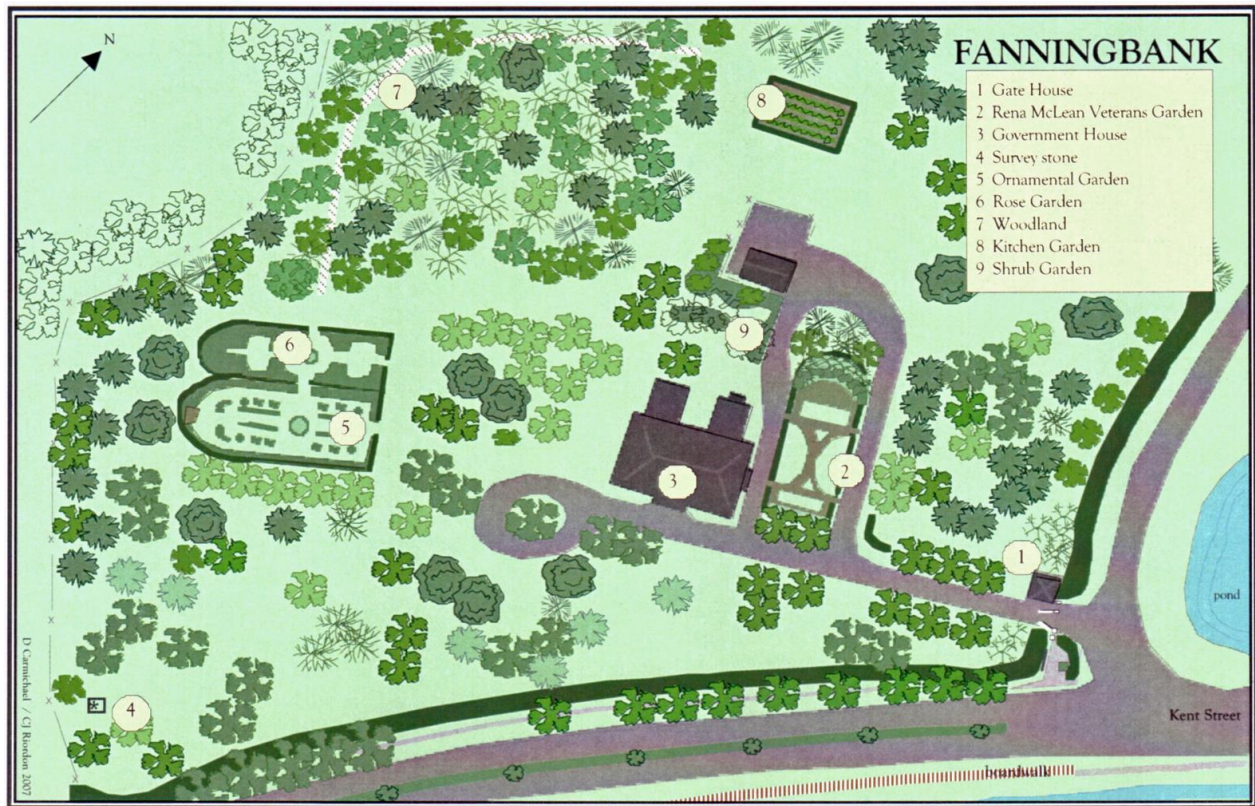
5. In the 1850s, a small marine hospital intended to quarantine cholera victims arriving in the harbour, was built near where the ice cream store is now located. There is no record if its ever being used;

6. In 1873, soon after the Island joined Confederation, 43 acres of the Fanningbank estate were ceded to the city as a public park. It would soon be named Victoria Park;

7. To provide easy access to Victoria Park the entire sea frontage of what was left of the Estate was expropriated to build a road. This was completed in 1897.



## The Fanningbank Gardens



Plan of the grounds with the various garden areas that are developed and maintained by the Government House Garden Committee, made up of volunteers from the community. This plan is part of a brochure that visitors may obtain to help them explore the grounds.

Today six separate garden areas surround Government House. The grounds are open to visitors, who are encouraged to explore and enjoy these features. In the manner of English estates, upon which the Fanningbank estate was modelled, the grounds surrounding the house served to enhance its appearance and to provide a variety of gentle outdoor activities for the occupants. The woods, with cleaned-out walks, would have been considered part of the extended gardens. In England, they were often referred to as the “Wilderness”. Dead Man’s Pond, now in Victoria Park, would probably have been a feature of these woodland walks.

1. The first garden was built in 1835, the year after the House was finished. It was a formal garden surrounded by a tall wooden fence 960 feet in circumference. The area of the garden was over an acre. It survived until World War I when Government House became part of a hospital for wounded soldiers and a nurses’

residence was built on that ground. When the hospital buildings were moved, or demolished in the late 1920s, a smaller version of the formal garden was built in roughly the same area as the original one. It survives today;

2. Early plans show us that fashionable Victorian garden beds were placed on the west side of the House and near the formal garden, making a planted transition between both. This area is reserved as lawn today but may, in the future, be developed again as the “West Garden”;

3. In 1980 plans were made to remove the roses from the formal garden and to construct a large rose garden. This garden is now about the size of the formal garden and it is placed next to it, near the woods;

4. In 2000 the Garden Committee constructed a shady Shrub Garden in the area between the back of the house and the garage;

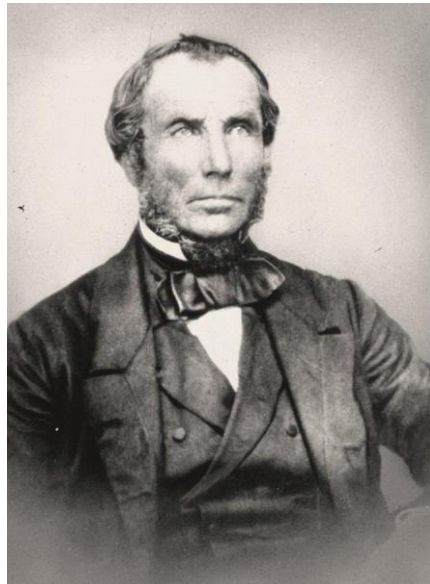
5. In 2002 and 2003 a replica of the Guardhouse was built to house an interpretative centre. The 1860 style ornamental gateway was reconstructed;

6. In 2003 a large formal garden was constructed on the east side of the House, its hedge enclosing the site of the 1917 Convalescent Hospital. Intended as a Memorial Garden, in 2003 it was formally called the Rena McLean Veterans Garden. A small memorial feature was added at its northern end commemorating Rena McLean, a World War I nurse who lost her life during the struggle;

7. The vegetable garden, now to the north of the garage, was moved to that spot in 1979 to construct the new rose garden. This garden is carefully designed and produces both vegetables and flowers for Government House;

8. In 2013, responding to a need expressed by the Lieutenant Governor for summer receptions, a garden pavilion was built on the north side of the house in the Shrub Garden area. The back of the house, only ever intended to be seen from the barnyard, was not attractive. This new focus brings a new dimension and sense of delight to that space.

## Government House and its Builder



Isaac Smith (1793-1871) emigrated to the Island at the age of 24 in 1817. He came from Yorkshire and his village was part of the great estate of Duncombe Park. During his years in Charlottetown, Smith was responsible for the design of all major architecture on the Island until his departure in 1848 to do missionary work for the Methodists in Nova Scotia. These buildings included the Pownal Street Jail in 1830, the Central Academy in 1832, Government House in 1832-34, the Wesleyan Chapel on Prince Street in 1833, Saint Paul's Church in 1836, the Point Prim Lighthouse in 1845 and Province House, completed in 1848. In all he was connected to the design and building of two-dozen structures that we know about.

The source of the design for Government House has been much debated over the years. In essence it is a typical Neoclassical-style house, similar to many hundreds built in Great Britain starting in the late 1600s and continuing until the mid-1800s. The design of a temple front entrance attached to a square or rectangular main block three stories high was invented by the Italians in the 1500s and reached its height of simplicity and elegance in the work of Andrea Palladio who flourished in the 1550s, hence the name "Palladian" given to this style. It became very popular in England during the reigns of Kings George I, II, III and IV, covering the period 1714 to 1830 and taking the name of the Georgian style after those rulers.



When Isaac Smith came to build a wooden Government House in 1832-34, a new architectural style, called the Greek Revival, had become popular in Eastern North America. Its essence was using architectural details that were closer to those the Greeks used rather than the Romans. It was heavier and more severe. Building in wood, Isaac Smith used horizontal boards separated by grooves for the cladding, thus suggesting a type of stone construction called French Rustication. It can still be seen on West End house on West Street and, in stone, on Province House and survives on the west wall of the west wing on Government House. The corner boards tended to be very wide to suggest Greek simplicity and solidity and in Smith's version of the style, they ended in the eaves with a large flat bracket called a modillion. The original appearance of the House can be seen in the restoration drawing below.



(Drawing by David Webber, private collection.)

The house was probably painted a warm pale colour to suggest stone and there are records that all the columns and the eaves they supported were painted using sanded paint to give the appearance and feeling of stone.

We do not know why Smith decided to build the elegant verandas on the three sides of the house. The veranda was an architectural feature adopted by the British

during their days of colonizing India and in England it was used as a picturesque feature in building small country houses. The fact that Government House is in such a picturesque location may have inspired Smith to add these features. Whatever the reason, they give Government House a very elegant and comfortable appearance despite its formal function as the home of the Governor.

Government House lost its original appearance in 1860 when the Prince of Wales, the future King Edward VII, visited the Island that summer. It was thought that the building was looking shabby, that the cladding caused the cold air to blow in during winter, and so everything was stripped and covered with plain shingles. Curiously the west wall of the southwest wing retained its original cladding where it may be seen today.



Photo, circa 1860, taken around the time of the Prince of Wales' visit.

It is during this period of change to the exterior that the Fathers of Confederation met at Government House and were caught in a photograph that has become an iconic image of Canadian Confederation.



(Photo: LAC).

The PEI “Fathers of Confederation” are those who attended one or more of the conferences at Charlottetown, Québec and London. For P.E.I., that includes the following:

George Coles  
A.A. Macdonald  
Edward Palmer  
W.H. Pope, Col.  
John Hamilton Gray  
T.H. Haviland  
Edward Whelan.

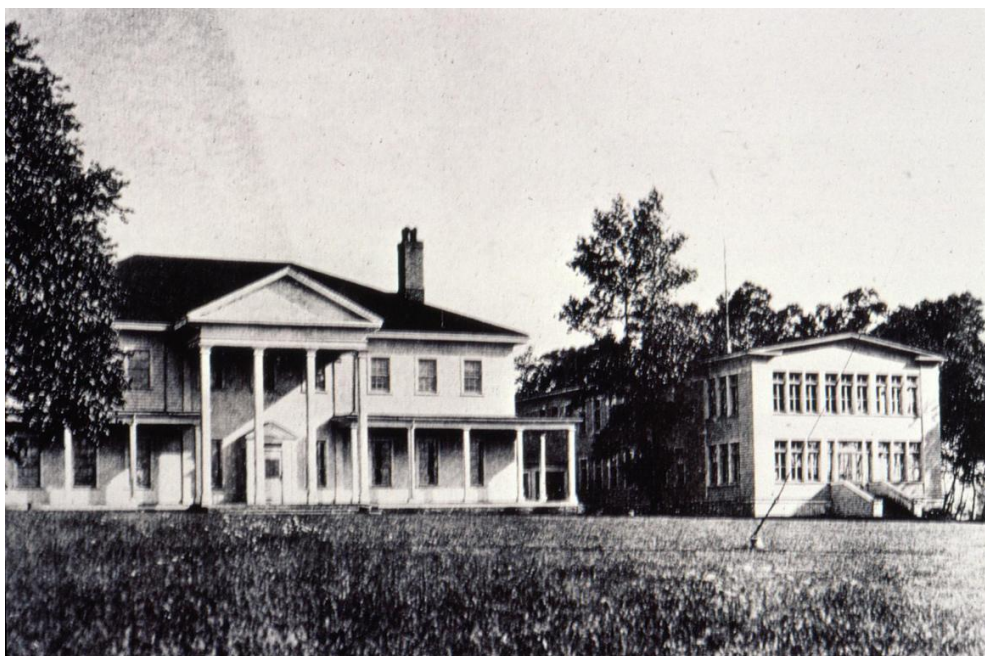
Soon after that, in the later 1870s, the round Ionic columns of the south portico and the smaller round Tuscan Doric columns of the verandas would be replaced with square posts. In the 1875-1914 period, every effort was made to turn Government House into a Victorian-style building with window boxes and dark trim. This can be seen in photos of that period.



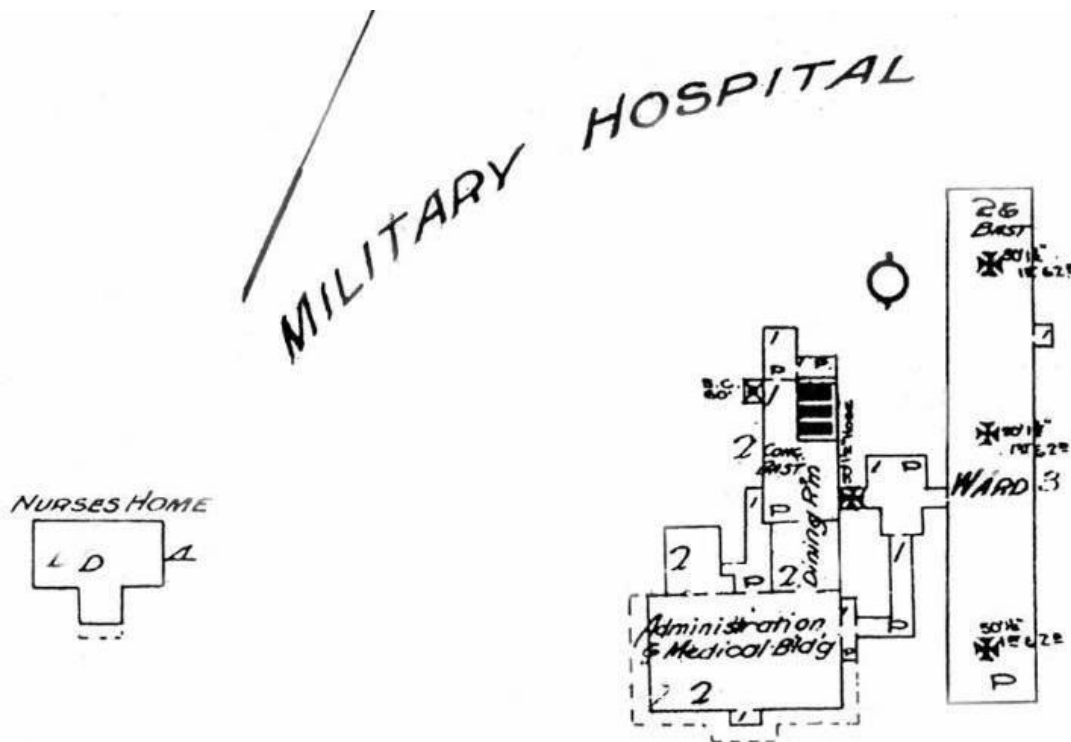


Government House with dark trim and window boxes in the Victorian style, (PARO)

In 1917, the Lieutenant Governor of the day, A. C. MacDonald, hearing that convalescent hospitals for veterans were badly needed, offered Government House for such a purpose. Huge additions were built on the east side with connecting passageways to the house, completely modifying the original appearance of the Governor's house and causing considerable interior changes.



The Military Hospital, renamed the Rena McLean Memorial Hospital (PARO)



Plan of the extensive changes to Government House and the surrounding grounds brought about by the construction of the Rena McLean Memorial Hospital. (PARO)

The convalescent hospital was almost never used and after the war it was turned into a technical school, dependent upon Federal funding. When that stopped, the whole complex closed and in the late 1920s there was talk of demolishing Government House and building a grand tourist hotel in its place. Fortunately, Lieutenant Governor Frank Hartz acted energetically to save the House and by 1930 it had been restored and ready to receive, after 13 years' absence, a new Lieutenant Governor. Government House now entered a long forty-year sleepy period with few changes and little maintenance.

## RECENT RESTORATIONS AND RENOVATIONS

It would not be until the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century that efforts would be made to partly restore the house to its original appearance. This massive surge of interest and

activity came from the Heritage Foundation. A Government House Committee was established in 1969 and by August 1970 the provincial government made this a permanent sub-committee of the Heritage Foundation which to this day continues to monitor and advise. This is the chronology of the major work that pertains to the House and grounds completed since that time:

1981 – replacement of the great Palladian window;

1987 – replacement of square posts on the south portico with hollow round columns manufactured in the US and with wooden Ionic capitals made in Charlottetown;

1994-96 – restoration of the east veranda (entablature and Tuscan Doric columns) and east portico with double columns;

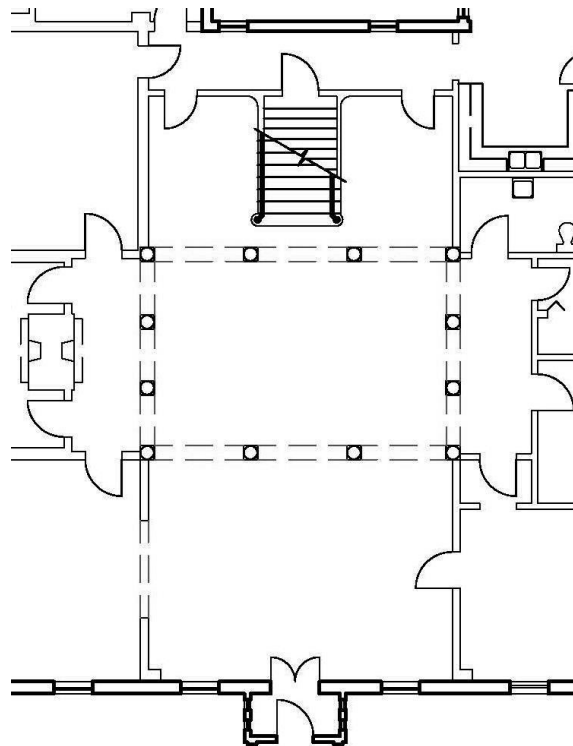
1996-98 – restoration of the west veranda (entablature and Tuscan Doric columns);

1998 – replacement of porch under the south portico with one in the original style;

1999 – replacement of the 1987 disintegrating wooden Ionic capitals on the south portico with cast metal replicas based on archaeological evidence.

During this time, the stone steps on the south and east sides were replaced with Nova Scotia sandstone. It was decided not to restore the original cladding of 1834 but replace the shingles that were seen by the Fathers of Confederation when they visited in 1864.

## The Saloon, now called the Entrance Hall





The Saloon, or as it is referred to today, the **Entrance Hall**, is the most spectacular space in Government House. (In the language of architecture, the word “saloon” refers specifically to a two-story hall at the centre of a royal suite of rooms and is usually adjacent to a gallery, as is the case at Government House. However, because of its later association with cowboy movies and car models, the word has almost lost its association with fine buildings.) Supported by 8 fluted Tuscan Doric columns and four pilasters is the Gallery that soars to the coffered ceiling, decorated with classical mouldings, rising to the level of the attic. One is immediately aware of the huge Palladian window at the end of the hall, providing large amounts of light for both the Saloon and the upstairs hall or Gallery. The grand staircase, with its landing just below the Palladian window, provides a further extension of already energetic space and a stage on which the Lieutenant Governor and his entourage can make a formal appearance. The whole space is like a small theatre and we the visitors are the audience.

### FURNISHINGS

Some of the original furniture for the house was purchased from the English firm of Thomas and George Seddon, very well-respected in their day. Today two sofas from that original order are seen in the Entrance Hall although they were originally ordered for the Drawing Room or Receiving Room as it is now called.

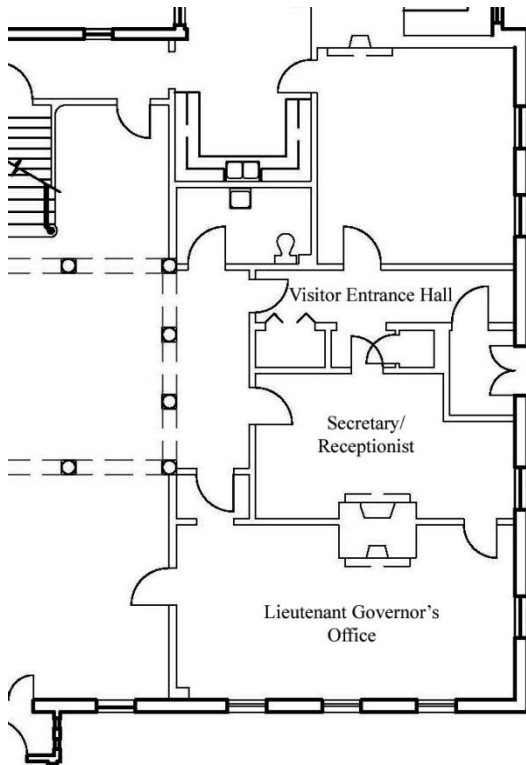


Two pier glasses and frames were also part of the original order for the Hall but no longer survive.

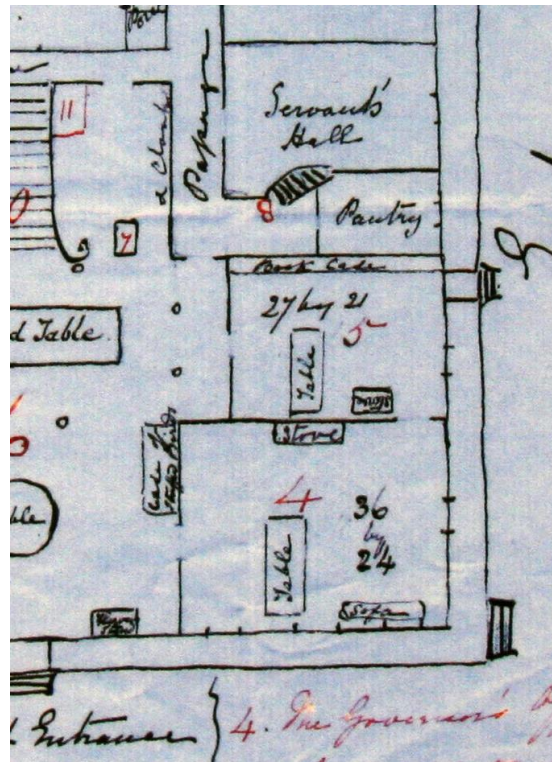
Also in the Entrance Hall is a very fine original marble mantelpiece, one of two to survive later changes in taste and practicality. In this example pairs of Doric pilasters hold up the mantel shelf. A more efficient fireplace, like a Franklin stove, was later inserted in the large stone opening to produce more heat with less fuel.



## The East Side for the Affairs of the Governor



The east side today.



The east side as it was in 1857. (CCAG)

Originally the east side of Government House was devoted almost entirely to the business of the Governor. Visitors entered through the very elegant east portico.





Through the door was a large waiting room that would have also served as the secretary's office. It would have been furnished with a desk, chairs and places to store books and file papers. A door (later sealed up and only uncovered in the 1990s) led directly to the Governor's Office.

One of the two original black marble fireplaces remaining in the House is found in the Governor's Office. An upper section, called the entablature, supports the mantel shelf and it in turn is supported by a pair of very fine free-standing Tuscan Doric columns, a feature that Isaac Smith would use in other buildings. The circular ornaments above the columns are called "rosettes" while the long oval feature between the rosettes is called a "cartouche".



From what is known at present the Governor's Office went out of use when Government House became part of a large hospital complex for wounded soldiers



in 1917. When the hospital was finally demolished in the 1920s several architects' plans from the times show that it served variously as an office and a sitting or morning room. Gradually its function as the Governor's Office seems to have been forgotten until recently.

In 2016 the Government House Committee, acting on recommendations first made in 1994, decided to restore the southeast room to the Governor as a place to conduct formal business in an appropriate setting while still retaining a suite of rooms in the upstairs of the east wing for ordinary daily business.

The restored office has a period desk along the east wall, next to the door to the secretarial area. A formal seating area around the elegant black marble fireplace, which is one of the only two surviving original set in the house, provides a comfortable setting to discuss affairs not necessarily suited to the social nature of the Receiving Room (Drawing Room) across the hall.

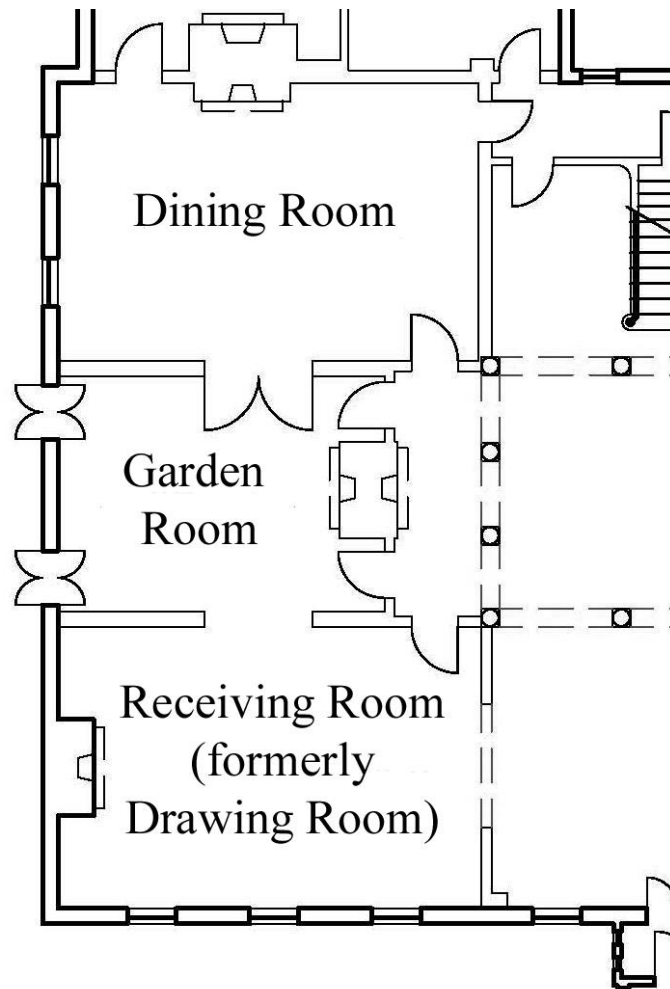
The walls are covered with pictures, maps and charts that tell the story of the evolution of Government House as the administrative centre of British-appointed Governors and, after Confederation, the home of Island-born Lieutenant Governors. A fine period bookcase has also been added.

Today the remainder of the east side consists of an office for the secretary/receptionist and entrance vestibule for daily visitors, cloakrooms and washrooms. The rest of the side is taken up by an elegant private Dining Room for the Lieutenant Governor that, in former times, used to be a servants' hall with a staircase to the second floor of the east wing.

An interesting feature from the House's early days can be found in the Lieutenant Governor's Office. When Government House was built all the first-floor windows had inside wooden shutters built to slide into the walls. They were quite heavy, thick as actual doors, and were called **night shutters**. They were there for security, but also it was believed at that time that night air caused various diseases such as malaria – which simply means “bad air.” These shutters, the only ones liberated from many coats of old paint, are no longer visible because of a new system of interior storm windows installed in the House. The following photograph can be used to give visitors an impression of what they looked like.



## The West Side for Formal Public Entertainment



The west side of Government House consists of a suite of rooms used exclusively for entertainment. Originally the Drawing Room (now called the Receiving Room) and Dining Room were separated by a hallway leading directly out of the Entrance Hall to the gardens on the west side. Doors, probably for privacy and the management of heating, were soon added. The hall was then renamed the Centre Drawing Room and is known today as the Garden Room.

## THE DRAWING ROOM, NOW CALLED THE RECEIVING ROOM

Today the Receiving Room is used for private entertainment, whether small scale as when the Lieutenant Governor entertains small numbers, or, more grandly, when large numbers of visitors assemble such as at the New Year Levee.

The room is now generally entered by a large opening directly from the Hall, giving a fine view of the fireplace and decorations at the west end. Originally there was no doorway into this room from the Hall. This opening may have been cut when the house was partially restored around 1930 after it ceased to be part of the World War I hospital.

The room is periodically arranged in variations of the formal manner inherited from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Around the mantelpiece, which is the focal and psychological centre of the room, period furniture consisting of sofas and chairs are arranged so that a small group can sit and converse comfortably next to the fire. Behind that grouping, and closer to the entrance, from time to time other traditional groupings with sofas and chairs and a centre table can be seen.



Two very fine gilt mirrors in the Greek Revival style, original to the house and described in the order from Seddons as “two plates of silvered glass, in moulded

frames, gilt in the best manner, in mal and burnished gold” are placed between the windows.

Placed below these mirrors are also original pieces from the house described as “A pair of mahogany card tables, on massive pillars and triangular plinths, ball feet, and castors, the whole highly polished.”

The present mantelpiece is not original to the house. It was probably installed during the renovations that took place after the Island joined Confederation in 1873. Around that time several “modern” fireplaces made of slate panels painted to look like marble and held together with clamps were installed in all the west rooms. They were much more efficient than the original marble fireplaces that had large openings where the heat escaped and which burned large quantities of wood. The new slate fireplaces were much shallower and had raised grates that could be used to burn coal. In time the original marbleised slate, which was dark, was brightened with white paint. This brings out details where the various pieces join and demonstrates the flaws of these mass-produced factory designs. Such mantelpieces with their original colouration and finish can be seen at Beaconsfield house across from the Fanningbank gates.

## THE CEILING PLASTERWORK



Moulded plaster cornice, typical of all those found in the west suite of rooms.



Moulded plaster rose or ceiling centre with a bead or astragal edge and a radiating lotus and acanthus design inspired by Greek and Roman ornament.

All the downstairs formal rooms on the west side of the house and the Entrance Hall have very elaborate and original plaster work along the cornices, where the walls meet the ceiling, and in the middle of each room where there is a large round elaborate moulded ornament called a rose from which a chandelier was intended to be hung.

These cornice and ceiling ornaments were very difficult to make, usually in two phases. The first was when the plasterer, with a board cut with the desired profile was run over wet plaster along the cornice or in a circle around the rose. After the plaster had set and was sanded smooth the other elements, already cast in moulds, and usually consisting of Greek and Roman-inspired ornaments, were attached to the base with wires and wet plaster. The effect is astonishing, especially if the plasterwork is painted white so that one can appreciate the play of shadows among the various elements. In late Victorian times these moulded details were often painted in contrasting colours. It is now the policy at Government House to keep these mouldings white as they would have been when the House was constructed.

The rose in the Dining Room is different from all the others and may be a later replacement as it is much less classical than the others.

## **THE GARDEN ROOM**

When Government House was constructed this room was connected directly to the central hall and led to the two French windows opening onto the west veranda and the gardens beyond. The chimney in the centre of the passage must have been awkward to get around. Soon after, however, four doors were installed, two leading into what now became a small Drawing Room and one each into the Receiving Room and Dining Room. It creates a complicated and awkward space through which to move.

In the original specifications for furnishings, this room was referred to as the “Centre Drawing Room”.



The room itself is lovely and forms the transition between the Receiving Room and the Dining Room, permitting an easy flow of guests from one major room to another.

The mantelpiece is not original but made of slate, originally painted to look like dark marble but now painted white to match the surrounding woodwork.

The Garden Room contains a very fine piece of furniture that is part of the original furnishings. It is described thus: “a 4 ft. 6 in. Mahogany Loo Table, on massive turned pillar and triangular plinth, ball feet and concealed castors, the whole highly polished.” Loo was a gambling card game with five to nine players. That is why these round card tables are so much larger than ordinary card tables, with diameters of 4-5 feet.



## THE DINING ROOM

The Dining Room, dominated by a large painted slate mantelpiece surmounted by a large over-mantle mirror, is very imposing as it was meant to be at large formal banquets given by the Governor.

The large dining table, although not the original, is of the correct style for the period. The dining chairs date to the 1840s and come from the Strathgartney Homestead, owned by Robert Bruce Stewart (1813-1884) near Bonshaw and one of the early Island estates. Many remember the house and its contents from its time as a rural life museum in the 1960s.



The magnificent Greek Revival sideboard with pedestals and a pedimented top is original to the house and is described in this way in the Seddon order: “A large mahogany Sideboard, with pedestal ends, with cellaret drawer and shelves, inclosed by panelled doors, a pediment shape back board on top, with carved pattern ornament – the whole highly polished”.



The rose or centrepiece in the ceiling of the dining room differs completely from the more severe classical ones in the rest of the house. It is much more plant-like or foliate in its design and may be a replacement from a later period.

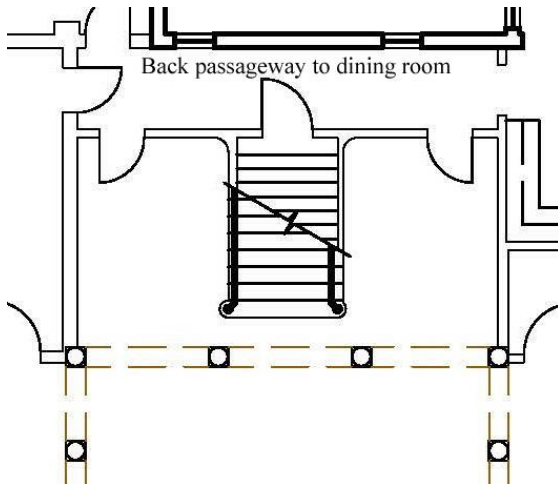


Although not original to the house, above the dining table, hanging as a permanent fixture, is a very fine crystal chandelier, bought from an antiques dealer in Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia. It fell from its ceiling attachment and was severely damaged, requiring a very expensive restoration. Today it looks splendid once again.

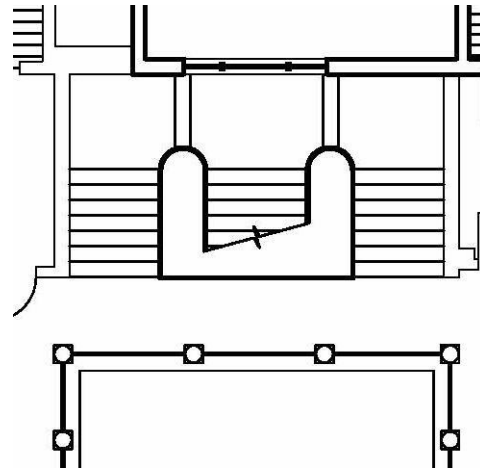


The Dining Room contains various pieces of silver and sets of fine china once associated with the house and the guides will be happy to point these out on request.

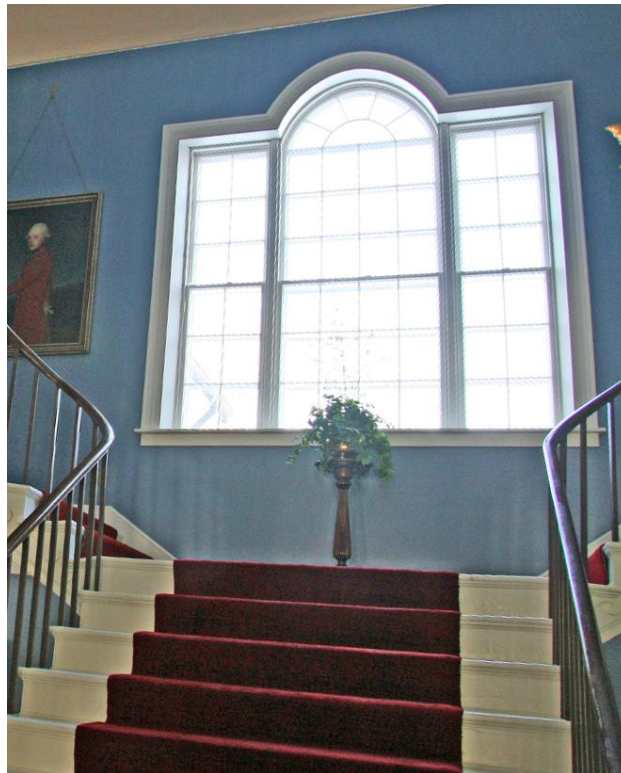
## The Grand or Ceremonial Staircase and Palladian Window



Stairs at ground level.



Stairs from landing to Gallery.



The most dramatic feature of the Entrance Hall is the very large divided staircase that leads to the second floor. The newel post and banisters are extremely simple

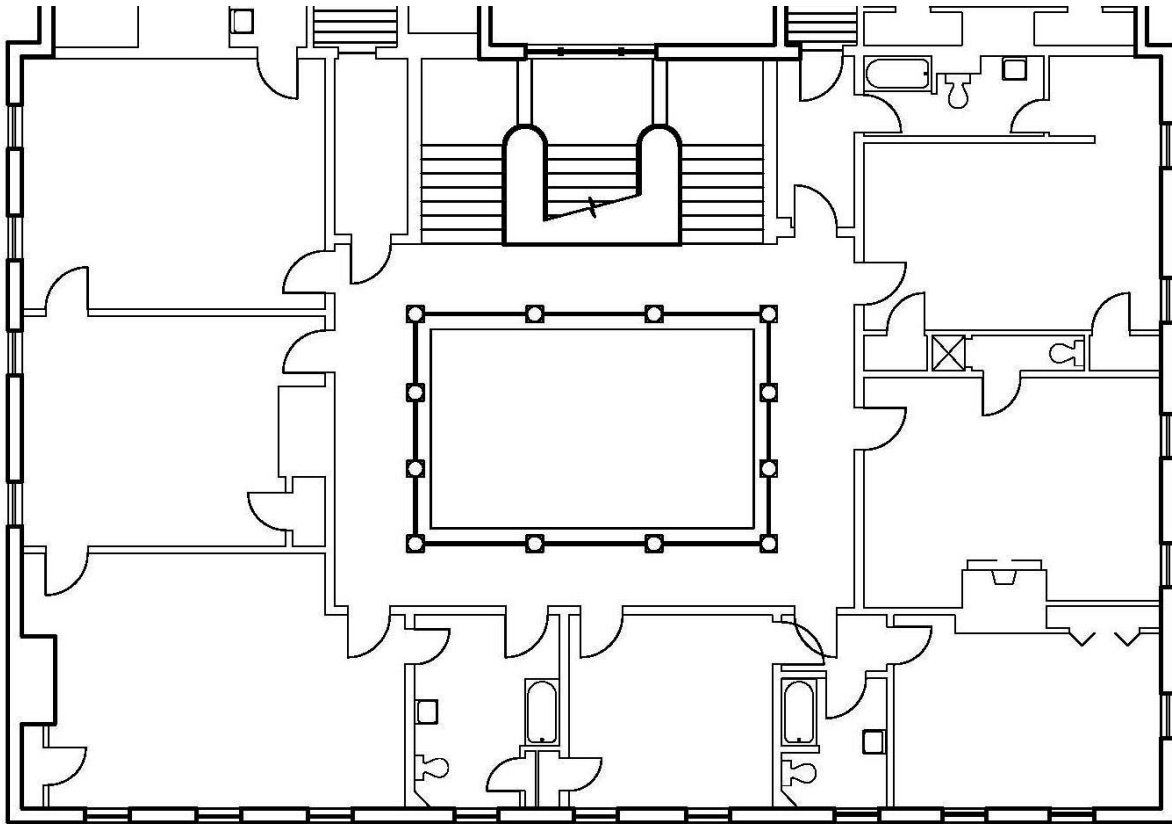
and like those found in other more modest houses built at this time. Eleven steps up the staircase levels out on a landing that is dwarfed by a huge Palladian window which provides light for the hall below and all the light for the upstairs hall or Gallery. Its great size is indeed an element of design but it also reflects the need for light on the north side of the House. In the Gallery, there are no other windows.

It is important to note that until the abandonment of the Government House farm at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century the entire area behind the House was an active farmyard with animals, manure, carriages, farm machinery, hen houses, barns and a coach house. These are all visible on early plans of the property. The window was a source of light but without a view and probably would have been covered with very thin muslin curtains to allow the light to penetrate but the sights to be obscured.

At the landing the staircase splits to left and right and, turning upon itself, reaches the Gallery with eight more stair treads. The view from the top is breath-taking.



## The Gallery or Upstairs Hall



In the exact centre of the upstairs hall is a rectangular Gallery which permits the occupants of the house to look down on the Entrance Hall. This is a fine example of the traditional Saloon/Gallery arrangement at the centre of royal suites of rooms. Eight classical columns and four corner pilasters support this feature above and below. It would have been a popular place during large assemblies for guests to gather around to gossip and look at the other guests gathered below.

On these big occasions, it is likely that a room with a considerable number of chamber pots would have been set aside for the use of the ladies.

Today the walls of this Gallery are used to hang, in chronological order, portraits of every Governor and Lieutenant Governor who ever served on the Island.

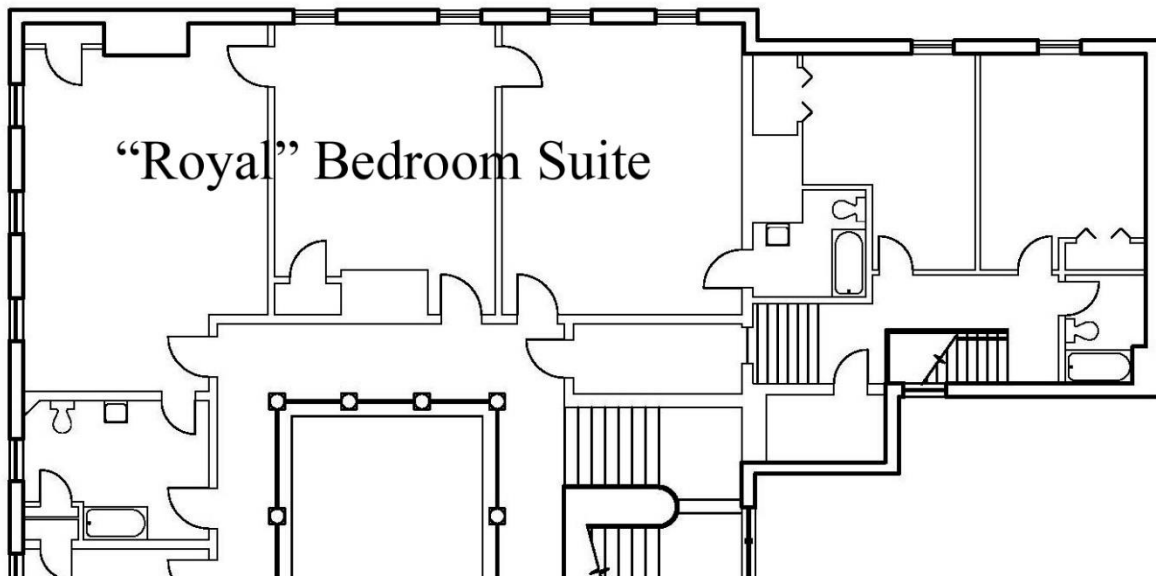
The only source of natural light for the Gallery is the upper portion of the great Palladian window which helps account for its placement on the north wall.





There is a very curious feature in the railing on the east side. At some time, a section of the rail was cut and hinged to the columns providing an opening – into empty space! It may have been used to hoist something – or somebody – up with a block and tackle. We don't know.

## The West Suite of Rooms – Second Floor



The west suite of bedrooms has, since the PEI Heritage Foundation took over the restoration and refurnishing of the house in the early 1970s, been set aside for very important guests such as Royal visitors. This has resulted in these three rooms being called the “Royal Suite”, thereby giving a false impression of their original use. The southwest corner room, for example, with its fine four poster bed, has been referred to as the “Queen’s bedroom”. This is sheer fantasy and has no historical validity at all. In the Appendix is a list of Royal visits to Government House. For the most part we don’t know where these Royal visitors slept.

Over the years, the various Lieutenant Governors have chosen whatever bedroom suited their fancy. There is only one historical record from Governor Daly’s time, a plan of the second story drawn by some member of his family, which indicates that he slept in the central bedroom on the west side while his wife slept in the corresponding room on the east side!

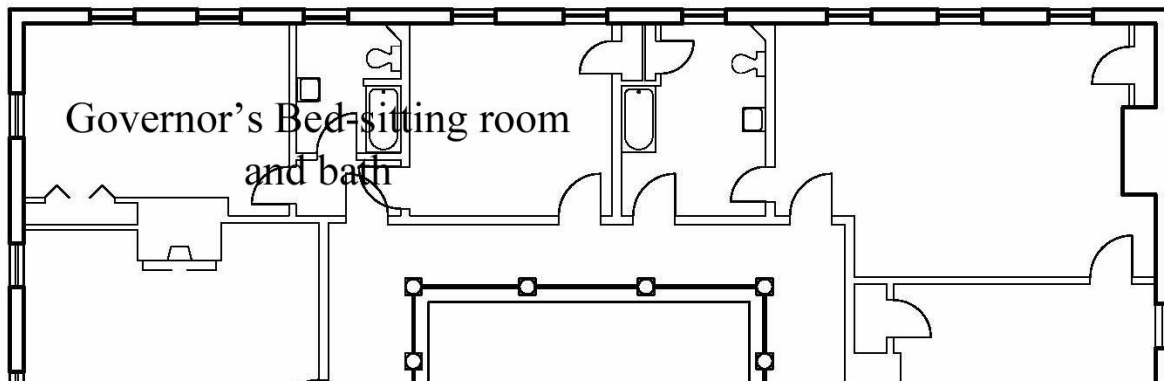
Each bedroom has its own entrance from the Gallery. It is possible, however, to see all three west rooms as a single suite with the centre room as a sitting room with entrances to the two flanking corner rooms.

The southwest corner bedroom, now the grandest in the house, has some fine furniture that was purchased especially for it, keeping in mind that it might

someday be slept in by members of the Royal Family. These pieces are likely to remain permanent fixtures of that room. Chief among these is a Georgian-style mahogany four-poster canopy bed said to have been made in England circa 1840 and a fine cheval glass, also from that period.



## The South Suite of Rooms – Second Floor



The front or south side of Government House was built with three bedrooms, each opening into the Gallery or hall. Over time, doors were moved to accommodate changes in the use of the rooms.

When Government House was built, there were no closets or bathrooms. Clothing was stored in various chests and wardrobes. Bedrooms had cupboards or chairs that contained chamber pots that were kept emptied by the servants.

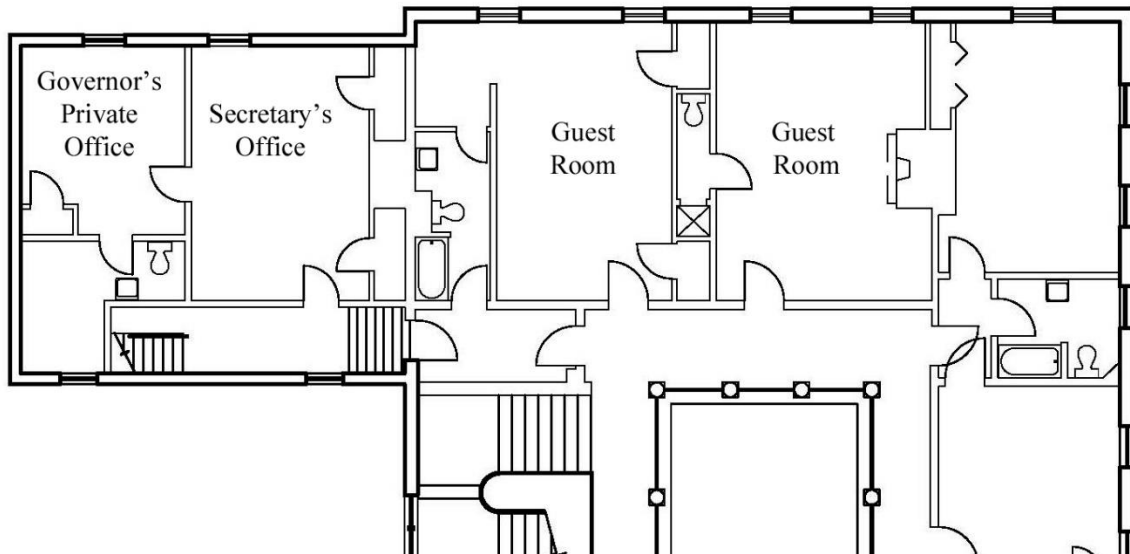
The east end has been made, in recent years, into a suite for the Lieutenant Governor. This consists of a bedroom, sitting room and bathroom.

At the west end is the four-poster bedroom reserved for Royal visitors.

The centre bedroom on this side no longer exists as the space has been taken over by the two end room suites.



## The East Suite of Rooms – Second Floor



The east suite of rooms on the second floor of Government House contain two bedrooms which visitors may view. The centre bedroom was created in 1991 by a Toronto decorating firm. The fine bedroom suite of bed and vanity table in the Renaissance Revival style of the 1865-75 period was owned by Lieutenant Governor Peter Adolphus MacIntyre (1899-1904).



## **The Private Areas**

Various parts of Government House are closed to visitors.

The Lieutenant Governor's bed-sitting room suite is in the southeast corner of the second floor.

The northwest wing of the House is also reserved for the Lieutenant Governor's private use as is the small Dining Room in the southeast corner of ground floor.

The Lieutenant Governor's working office suite is in the second floor of the northeast wing.


The kitchens and food preparation areas are on the ground floor of the northeast wing.

## Appendix I

### Governors and Lieutenant Governors of P.E.I.

#### Governors Prince Edward Island – 1769-1873

**(Note: Governors and Lieutenant Governors with particular connections to Government House have been identified with a portrait and descriptive note.)**

	Appointment
Walter Patterson (c.1735-1798)	1769-1787
Edmund Fanning (1737-1818)	1787-1804
	
<p>It was Governor Fanning, a highly educated and cultivated man, who in 1789 set aside 100 acres of the Charlottetown Common to become the self-sufficient estate of the colonial governors. It took 45 years for Fanning's dream to be realised.</p>	
Joseph Frederick Wallet DesBarres (1722-1824)	1805-1812
Charles Douglas Smith (1761-1855)	1812-1824
Colonel John Ready (1777 – 1845)	1824-1831

Sir Aretas William Young (1778-1835)

1831-1835



He was the first Governor to occupy the newly-built Government House. Sadly, his health failed and he died shortly thereafter.

Sir John Harvey (1778-1852)

1836-1837

Sir Charles Augustus FitzRoy (1796-1858)

1837-1841

Sir Henry Vere Huntley (1795-1864)

1841-1847

Sir Donald Campbell, Bt (1800-1850)

1847-1850

**Responsible Government was established in PEI in 1851.  
George Coles was the first Premier.**

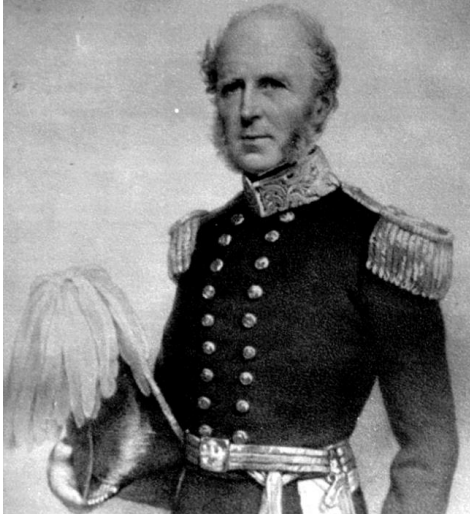
Sir Alexander Bannerman (1788-1864)

1850-1854



Sir Dominick Daly (1798-1868)

1854-1859



Sir Dominick Daly's time as Governor is remembered affectionately by historians because his enthusiastic family painted watercolours of various aspects of the house and gardens, produced a plan of the estate and the only plans of the House ever to indicated how the various rooms were used.

Sir George Dundas (1819-1880)

1859-1868



Governor Dundas had an exciting term. First, the Prince of Wales visited in 1860; Government House was completely clad in shingles and in 1864 he met and celebrated with the Fathers of Confederation. Photography for the first time became popular in his entourage, especially the work of Henry Cundall and his new hobby. As a result, there is a collection of valuable photographs

that portrays Government House and its occupants for the first time ever.

## **Prince Edward Island becomes a Province of Canada in 1873.**

### **Lieutenant Governors of the Province of Prince Edward Island**

Sir William Cleaver Francis Robinson (1834-1897)

1870-1873



Lieutenant Governor Robinson lived through stressful times as he worked to have Prince Edward Island join Confederation as well as being involved in a long struggle with the City of Charlottetown that wanted 47 acres of the Fanningbank estate to make into a public park, later known as Victoria Park.

Sir Robert Hodgson (1798 – 1880)

1874-1879

He was the first Island-born Lieutenant Governor.

Thomas Heath Haviland (1822-1895)

1879-1884

Andrew Archibald Macdonald (1829-1912)

1884-1889

Jedidiah Slason Carvell (1832-1894)	1889-1894
George William Howlan (1835-1901)	1894-1899
Peter Adolphus McIntyre (1840-1910)	1899-1904
Donald Alexander MacKinnon (1863-1928)	1904-1910
Benjamin Rogers (1837-1927)	1910-1915
Augustine Colin Macdonald (1837-1919)	1915-1919



It was Lieutenant Governor MacDonald who offered Government House to the nation for use as a convalescent hospital for wounded veterans of World War I. It was a patriotic gesture that however sent Government House into a decline from which it nearly did not emerge. The garden was built over, a huge hospital building was constructed and the whole east side of Government House was turned into a massive dining room for the hospital. Later all this would be turned into a short-lived technical college in the 1920s. (Photo: LAC)

Murdoch McKinnon (1865-1944)	1919-1924
------------------------------	-----------

Frank Richard Hartz (1871-1955)

1924-1930



It was Governor Hartz who was the moving force behind the saving of Government House and its restoration in the late 1920s. (Photo: PARO)

Sir Charles Dalton (1850-1933)

1930-1933

George DesBrisay De Blois (1887-1964)

1933-1939

Bradford William LePage (1876-1964)

1939-1945

Joseph Alphonsus Bernard (1881-1962)

1945-1950

Thomas William Lemuel Prowse (1888-1973)

1950-1958



When T W L Prowse and his wife moved into Government House in 1950 they embarked upon a massive redecoration scheme for the whole house



in the latest style that was enthusiastically described in the Guardian of May 30, 1951. It is the only record of such decoration projects to be described in detail and is a fascinating account of interior design practices in that period.

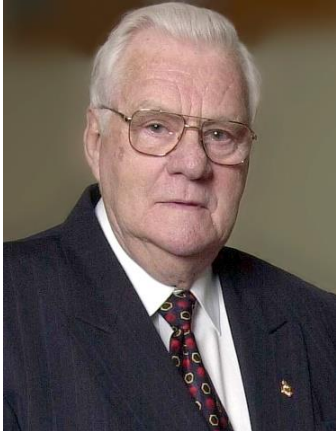
Frederick Walter Hyndman (1904-1995)	1958-1963
Willibald Joseph MacDonald (1897-1977)	1964-1969
John George McKay (1893-1974)	1969-1974
Gordon Lockhart Bennett (1912-2000)	1974-1980
Joseph-Aubin Doiron (1922-1995)	1980-1985
Robert Lloyd George MacPhail (1920-1995)	1985-1990
Marion Reid (1929- )	1990-1995



During Marion Reid's time as Lieutenant Governor the complete restoration of the East veranda was begun in 1994 and finished in 1996. The east side of the house saw its entrance restored in its original position. A new vestibule, washrooms and receptionist's office were also constructed. The door to the Governor's office, sealed up in the wall probably since the 1930s renovations, was opened.

Gilbert R. Clements (1928-2012)

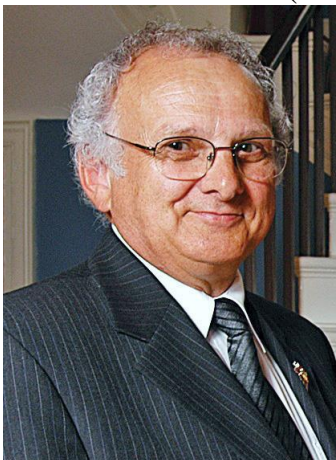
1995-2001



During Gilbert Clement's time in office the work on the East veranda was completed and the west veranda completely restored beginning in 1996. Now, the whole house was re-shingled, the first time since 1860. As well in 1999 correct Ionic capitals cast in metal were installed on the south portico.

J. Léonce Bernard (1943- 2009)

2001-2006



Lieutenant Governor Bernard was the first governor to approve tours of the House for visitors in 2002. During his time a replica of the guardhouse was built to house an interpretative centre and the 1860 ceremonial gateway restored.

Barbara A. Hagerman (1943-2016)

2006-2011

H. Frank Lewis (1939- )

2011 -



Lieutenant Governor Frank Lewis arranged for a garden pavilion to be erected behind Government House to facilitate outdoor entertainment. Its shape reflects the Guard House at the gates. The Governor also oversaw the production of three major reports on the history of Government House and the introduction of new criteria for the volunteer guides to use in the interpretation of the House. The new handbook (2017) also celebrates Isaac Smith's 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of arriving in PEI in 1817.

Antoinette Perry

2017 -



## Appendix II

### Royal Visits to Government House

(This list is a work in progress. Information may be incomplete.)

- |                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>1860</b>                   | HRH Prince Edward, Prince of Wales, future King Edward VII visited 10-11 of August.<br><b>Stayed at Government House.</b>   |
| <b>1861</b>                   | HRH Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh (Younger son of Queen Victoria)  |
| <b>1869</b>                   | HRH Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught and Strathearn<br><b>Stayed at Government House</b>  |
| <b>1905</b>                   | Admiral of the Fleet, HRH Prince Louis of Battenberg, Marquis of Milford Haven,<br><b>Attended a Ball at Government House</b>   |
| <b>1912</b>                   | HRH Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught and Strathearn – Governor General of Canada, his wife HRH Princess Louise Margaret of Prussia, and their daughter HRH Princess Patricia,<br><b>Stayed at Government House</b>                      |
| <b>1919</b>                   | HRH Prince Edward, Prince of Wales (King Edward VIII, abdicated Dec. 1936) - visited convalescing soldiers at Rena McLean Hospital (east side of Government House).<br>The Official Luncheon was held in town due to smallpox epidemic. |
| <b>1939</b><br><b>14 June</b> | H.M. King George VI and H.M. Queen Elizabeth (later Queen Mother), first visit of reigning monarch to Canada<br><b>Luncheon at Government House</b>   |



- 1951**  
**9 Nov** H.R.H. Princess Elizabeth and H.R.H. Philip, Duke of Edinburgh  
**Luncheon at Government House**  
Dinner at Charlottetown Hotel  
**Stayed at Government House overnight.**
- 1959**  
**30-31 July** H.M. Queen Elizabeth II and H.R.H. Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh  
Afternoon tea at the Prowse Family Farm near Brackley;  
Luncheon at the DeBlois Summer Residence
- 1964**  
**Oct.** HM Queen Elizabeth II and HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, opening of the Confederation Centre of the Arts and Memorial Hall to Fathers of Confederation.
- 1967**  
**July** HM Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother  
**Luncheon at Government House.**
- 1973**  
**June-July** HM Queen Elizabeth II and HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, accompanied by HRH Princess Anne, The Princess Royal  
**Garden Party at Government House**
- 1983**  
**June-July** H.R.H. Prince Charles, Prince of Wales and H.R.H. Diana, Princess of Wales  
**Garden Party at Government House**
- 1987**  
**June** HRH Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex  
**Garden Party**  
**Stayed at Government House for 2 nights**
- 1989**  
**July** HRH Prince Andrew, Duke of York and HRH Sarah, Duchess of York  
**Official Dinner in town**

- 2000  
16 July** HRH Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex and HRH Sophie, The Countess of Wessex (Sophie Reese-Jones)  
**Luncheon and Garden Party at Government House**
- 2007  
October** HRH Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex visited Charlottetown and UPEI receiving an Honorary Degree.  
**Stayed at Government House**
- 2011  
July 3** HRH Prince William, Duke of Cambridge and HRH Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge.  
**Stayed at Government House**
- 2014  
May** HRH Prince Charles, Prince of Wales and HRH Camilla Duchess of Cornwall.  
Took part in the Festivities surrounding the 150th Anniversary of the Charlottetown Conference.  
**Stayed at Government House**
- 2015  
November** HRH Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex, Colonel in Chief of the PEI Regiment, took part in the celebration of the 140th anniversary of the Regiment. Presenting new Regimental colours on behalf of the Sovereign.  
**Stayed at Government House.**

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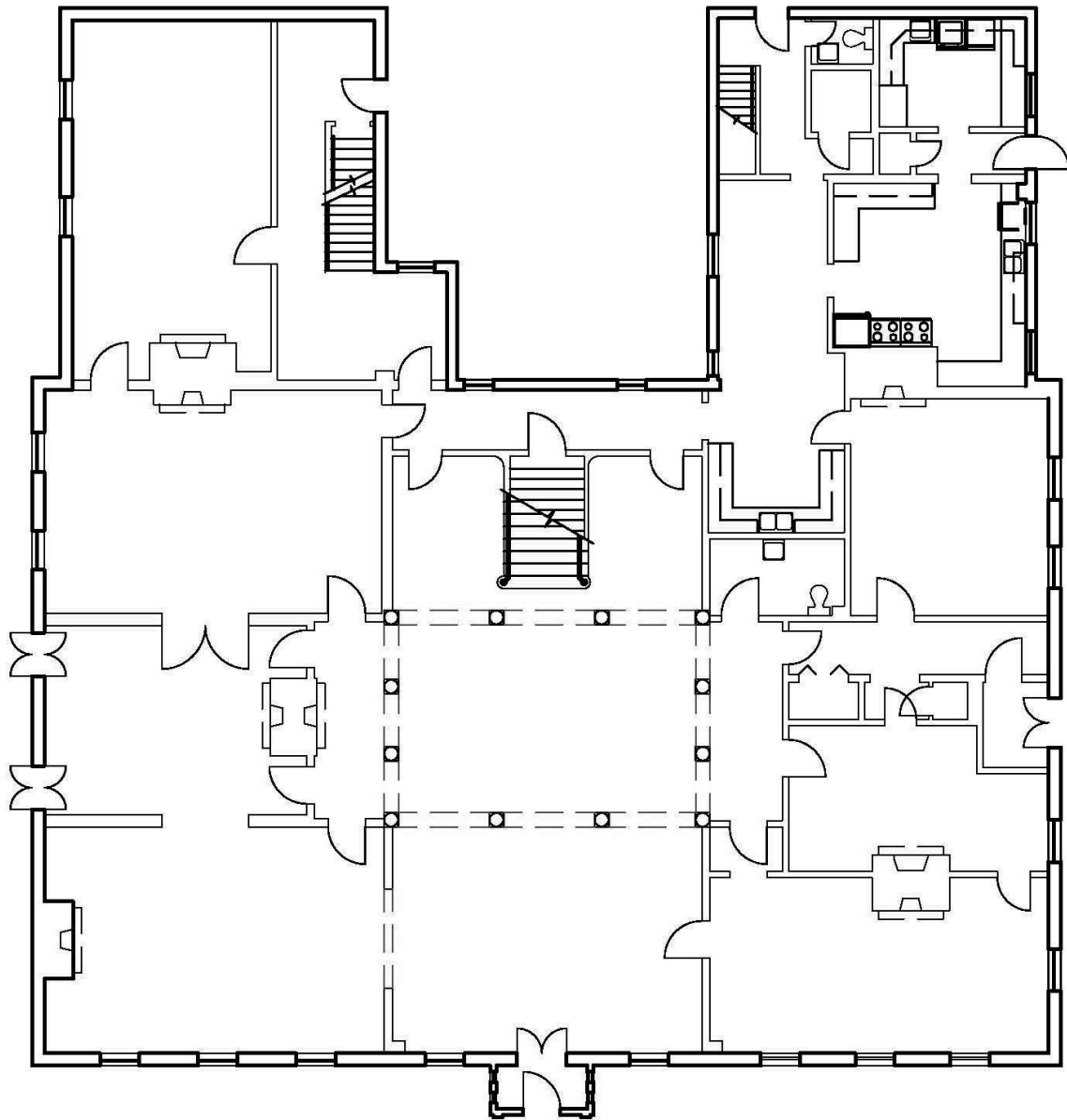
Lieutenant Governor of Prince Edward Island

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lieutenant\\_Governor\\_of\\_Prince\\_Edward\\_Island](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lieutenant_Governor_of_Prince_Edward_Island)

Office of the Lieutenant Governor

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/olg/>

## Plan of the Ground Floor



## Plan of the Second Floor

