

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Gunshed was built in 1821, by the Corps of Royal Engineers, as part of the Butler's Barracks encampment for British troops. The encampment continued to be used by Canadian troops in training until 1969. The building has recently undergone work to restore its early 19th-century appearance. Environment Canada is the custodial department. See FHBRO Building Report 89-16.

Reasons For Designation

The Gunshed was designated Recognized as a result of its long association with the British and Canadian military forces, for its functional architectural qualities, and for its landmark status.

Butler's Barracks was built by the British, after the War of 1812-14, to house and train troops for the defence of Upper Canada. The Gunshed, built in 1821, was designed initially to store British ordnance. Later, it was used for more general storage, serving this function as part of the continuing use of the site as a military training complex. It is thus associated with the evolution of the regular Canadian army and the militia. The Gunshed is also associated with the growth and defence of Niagara-on-the-Lake and its continuing economic development.

The Gunshed is a very good surviving example of an early 19th-century wooden ordnance facility, and contributes to the military character of the historic site.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Gunshed is defined by its simple massing, its regular rhythm of bays, its materials, and its military character.

The Gunshed is a one-storey rectangular hipped-roof structure, with seven large double-leaf doors. The exterior massing of the structure - a long low rectangle broken only on the front façade by regularly spaced openings - and the simple unadorned appearance expresses its functional nature. The use of local materials - wood frame construction on a stone foundation, clapboard siding, and wood shake roof cladding, is consistent with the other structures on the site and is typical of the designs employed by the Corps of Royal Engineers.

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The Gunshed is one of the few structures surviving from the original Butler's Barracks encampment. It remains on its original site, although the gun ramps are no longer present.

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