

## **HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

The Guardhouse/Orderly Room was built in 1939, to designs by Toronto architects W.L. Somerville and Edward Carswell, as part of the reconstruction of Fort George. Minor repairs to the structure have occurred. The Environment Canada Parks Service is the custodial department. See FHBRO Building Report 89-15.

### **Reasons For Designation**

The Guardhouse/Orderly Room was designated Recognized because of its association with the 1930s philosophy of preservation and presentation of historic sites, its architectural qualities and use of traditional materials and techniques, and its compatibility with the environment.

During the 1930s, historic sites in Canada were developed and expanded as a result of the provision of government funding for Depression relief works programs. The philosophy of historic reconstruction employed in this period followed a North American pattern influenced by the reconstruction of Colonial Williamsburg. A recognition that an increase in private ownership of automobiles would encourage tourism, promoted the reconstruction of Fort George as a tourist destination. Both the reconstruction process and the subsequent attraction of the public to the area contributed to the economic development of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Reconstructions were generally based on extensive research. However, the information about Fort George was freely interpreted by the architects. The Guardhouse/Orderly Room is only loosely based on its 1802 antecedent. The exposed log construction is consistent with other buildings on the site, and represents the designers' concept of a "frontier" aesthetic.

The Guardhouse/Orderly Room contributes to the military character of Fort George and, given its interpretive use, is a well-known local landmark.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of this structure is defined by its "frontier" aesthetic, its functional design, its use of traditional materials and craftsmanship, and its contribution to the character of the setting.

The Guardhouse/Orderly Room is a rectangular single-storey building, constructed of squared logs with dovetailed corners. The low gabled roof is covered by hand-split

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cedar shakes. Its exposed log construction, small-sized windows, and functional placement of chimneys, doors and windows represent Somerville's and Carswell's concept of a frontier aesthetic.

The use of traditional materials, methods, and tools in the construction was part of the reconstruction philosophy of the 1930s. Logs were milled in a saw-pit on site, and broad-axes and adzes were used for finishing. As the heritage character of the Guardhouse/Orderly Room resides in the use of traditional materials and construction, these elements should be preserved.

The Guardhouse/Orderly Room contributes to the military atmosphere of the fort, and is a local landmark.

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