Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario
Navy Hall

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

Navy Hall is believed to have been built in 1815-17 by the British military. It was
relocated once in 1863, then again during the extensive renovations of 1937. The
building is now part of Fort George National Historic Park for which it serves as the
administrative offices. Environment Canada, Canadian Parks Service is custodian of
the building. See FHBRO Building Report 88-147.

Reason for Designation

Navy Hall was designated Recognized because it illustrates changing approaches to
the management of important historic buildings over time. In particular, it illustrates the
role of visual aesthetics in conservation in the 1930s.

The setting of Navy Hall reflects the beautification and parkway landscaping scheme of
the 1930s.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of Navy Hall is defined by its extant original form, fabric and
design, and those features pertaining to the 1930s renovation.

In terms of the original c.1815 military building, the authenticity of Navy Hall has been
substantially diminished due to deterioration, adaptive re-use, and several major
renovations. Heavily altered in detail and material since its original construction, Navy
Hall is reminiscent of the original Georgian structure in its long, low, hip-roofed form,
points of entry, and elements of its structure, both original and replacement. The
building has retained some early fabric and authentic design details through past
conservation and restoration action.

Its exterior fabric - stone cladding, copper-clad roof, and the enhanced symmetry of the
fenestration are features of the 1930s intervention. These features, clearly of a later
era and philosophy, reflect the classical revival tastes of the period and the design
idiom of the Niagara Parks Commission.

In this context, any intervention should not endeavor to recover more of the early
military character at the expense of those features that pertain to the 1930s' intervention and commemoration. In terms of the exterior this means that the present
design should remain. The interior offers greater flexibility with regard to spatial
arrangement and planning.

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Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario
Navy Hall (Continued)
The building's current use is entirely appropriate, however, return to a more public use would be consistent with its heritage value.

The setting of Navy Hall consists of well-maintained lawns, walls, and walks, all introduced as part of the NPC's parkway landscaping scheme in the 1930s. This approach to site design and maintenance is compatible with the present character of the building and should continue.

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