

89-40

Kingston, Ontario

Ross Block

Fort Frontenac

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Ross Block was built in 1936. It was designed to house offices, lecture rooms and living quarters as the Royal School of Artillery and Brigade Building by the Department of Public Works. It is linked to the adjacent Courcelles Block which was built in 1941. The Department of National Defense is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 89-40.

Reasons for Designation

The Ross Block was designated Recognized because of its architectural importance, its environmental and local significance to Kingston, and its historical role.

The Ross Block is a neo-Georgian style building with Beaux-Arts influences. Symmetry, good proportions and simple classical details characterize the design.

The building was constructed on the site of an older barracks and maintains the original configuration of the fort. The Ross Block's height, scale, and appearance are compatible with adjacent stone barracks. It is familiar as one of several buildings comprising Fort Frontenac.

Originally the Royal School of Artillery and Brigade Building, this was the first teaching facility at the fort. The Ross Block is situated within the original Tête de Pont barracks, a walled complex of seven buildings, four of which were built as barracks by the Royal Engineers. The construction of the Ross Block illustrates the developing role of Fort Frontenac as a training facility.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Ross Block resides in the building's form, its overall proportions, the quality of its construction materials and architectural details, surviving elements of the interior layout, and its relationship to the site and setting.

The Ross Block is a simple rectangular two-storey structure with a low hipped roof. The footprint and the simple roof form should be maintained. The two storey flat-roofed link with the adjacent Courcelles Block undermines the symmetry of the composition; its materials and design should be modified to make it more sympathetic to the original building.

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Kingston, Ontario

Ross Block (cont'd)

The well proportioned, symmetrically organized ten-bay facade with identical entrances at each end should not be altered. The regular rhythm of the window arrangement contributes to the sense of balance and order and is a characteristic of neo-Georgian style.

The building is characterized by the quality of its masonry. The dressed limestone walls are laid in even courses, and are accented by simple details such as the projecting base courses and window sills and the cornice trim at the top of the wall. The entrances have a projecting surround with detailing reflecting Beaux-Arts influences. These details are integral to the character of the building and should be maintained. The building materials merit appropriate conservation expertise and regular maintenance.

The six-over-six wood double hung-windows and wood doors with multi-pane sidelights are consistent with the original character of the design and should be maintained. Windows which are blocked alter the symmetrical balance of the facade and should be re-instated. The modern metal screen doors are inappropriate in material and design; the integrity of the building would be enhanced by removing them, or replacing them with screen doors of a more appropriate design.

The original interior layout was adapted to its current function with minor modifications. The interior configuration and patterns of entry and circulation should be maintained. Any surviving interior finishes characteristic of the period should be protected.

A landscape program in the 1930s improved and refined the site with lawns and trees. Landscape modifications should be limited to low small-scale landscape material in keeping with the current formal character of the site. Signage would not be appropriate on the building as it would detract from the symmetry and simple expression of materials characteristic of the style.

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For further guidance, please refer to the *FHBRO Code of Practice*.