

FHBRO Number 90-031e

Second-class Hotel (No. 22)

Grosse Île, Québec

Constructed in 1893 to provide first-class accommodations, the present Second-class Hotel was superseded in 1912-13 by the facility now known as the First-class Hotel (No. 14). The Second-class Hotel was used as a barracks during the Second World War. The ground floor was subsequently converted to a warehouse. The building plans evidently were prepared by an architect in the Department of Public Works. The Second-class Hotel is owned by Parks Canada and is part of Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site. See FHBRO Report No. 90-31 (Part III: 1881-1 900).

Reasons for Designation

The Second-class Hotel has been designated Classified because of its considerable historical significance and its architectural and environmental qualities.

Immigration to Canada from Great Britain increased substantially between 1881 and 1900. Many of these immigrants were farmers with financial means who were drawn to the Canadian prairies, partly because of the rapid decline of the farming sector in Great Britain. The construction of a hotel to accommodate these relatively well-heeled passengers bears witness to this historical context.

This period also saw efforts to halt the spread of contagious diseases using scientific disinfection methods. Around 1874, medical superintendent Frederick Montizambert reinstated the division of the island into three segregated sections, originally introduced in 1848. The western section was for “healthy” individuals, the central section for staff, and the eastern section for hospitals. The Second-class Hotel was located in the “healthy” western section.

Totally reconstructed in 1893, the building bears some resemblance to the large colonial-style homes found on the east coast of the United States. The great functionality of its design was undoubtedly one of the reasons why the new First-class Hotel was built to a similar design. The choice of materials and construction techniques clearly reflect the artisan styles of the period.

The historical association between the Second-class Hotel and its landscape environment is relatively unchanged. Its choice location on the island shore affords it excellent visibility. The structure is a symbol for the whole area, as are the first-class and third-class hotels, which were also used to accommodate healthy immigrants.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Second-class Hotel resides in its form inspired by residential architecture, its functional interior layout, and its craftsmanship resulting from

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the limited use of industrialized materials.

The Second-class Hotel is a very large two-storey wood building which, because it has three separate roofs, looks somewhat like three row-houses. The centre section is the highest and contains the common areas; on each side is a long wing of rooms, and the kitchen annex is in the rear. A long verandah raised off the sloping ground runs the full length of the facade. This architectural scheme ingeniously reflects the building's functions and should be conserved.

The construction of this old Second-class Hotel was not extravagant. The clapboard siding, the regular arrangement of doors and windows, and the St. Andrew's crosses in the verandah railing all help to create a homey air. Other ornamental details are the arrangement of the bricks and the colours in the chimney heads. Where unrepairable or missing elements must be replaced, such formal features should be restored. The original wood-shingle roofing was widely used in the late 19th century; for that reason, restoration of the wood shingle roofing could be considered.

There have been some alterations to the interior layout. The main dining room on the ground floor and the large hall on the second floor still have their two brick fireplaces, however. These "luxury" appointments remind modern visitors of the building's original purpose. The remaining wooden mantels adorned with mouldings can serve as models for the replacement of the missing mantels. Even the missing interior walls of the bar, office and rooms could be rebuilt where required, since their former locations are clearly visible.

Although the interior walls of the ground-floor guest rooms were removed, those on the second floor are still intact. The layout of the second floor should be conserved, including some signs of occupancy, like brackets for bunks and shelves, ventilation holes, and graffiti. These are important signs of the building's original role.

Many of the original materials have been preserved. The heritage value of the building resides to a significant degree in such interior elements as the beautiful staircase with turned balusters, tongue-and-groove panelling on walls and ceilings, panel doors, and period hardware. The chair rails mounted on some walls between two contrasting colours—to suggest wainscotting—is another interesting ornamental detail.

The immediate environment of the Second-class Hotel has retained a rustic air which should be preserved. Also, any development on the island should not alter the relationship between historic buildings. Finally, old roads, paths, sidewalks and other traffic routes to and from the building should not be obliterated. The same applies to the fire escapes installed in or around 1911. In addition, the area around and under the

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building contains stratigraphic architectural and artifactual remains.

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

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Translation