

FHBRO Number 90-27a

Fort Lennox, Quebec

Barracks

Saint-Paul-de-l'Île-aux-Noix

The Barracks at Fort Lennox was constructed between 1825 and 1829 under the direction of Captain P. Cole and other officers of the Royal Engineers. The Barracks was originally used as soldiers' quarters. After Fort Lennox was designated a national historic site in 1922, the building was used for storage and a coffee room. Between 1940 and 1944 it was a dormitory for refugees, and from 1945 to 1948, Jeunesse étudiante catholique used it for their activities. Today, a snack bar and public washrooms occupy the south end, and a workshop and storage space take up the remainder of the ground floor. Part of the second floor houses a soldier's dormitory reconstructed as it would have been in the 19th century; the rest of the floor is unused. The Barracks is part of the Fort Lennox National Historic Site. Parks Canada is the custodian. See FHBRO Report No. 90-27.

Reasons for Designation

The Fort Lennox Barracks has been designated Classified because of its considerable architectural and environmental value and because of the significance of the historical theme associated with it.

Although military barracks are usually designed as simple utilitarian structures, the Fort Lennox Barracks possesses a grander character. Its aesthetic design was influenced by Palladian architecture in Canada in the early 19th century. Its interior layout, which was intended to accommodate as many soldiers as possible, is very basic. The longevity of the barracks and the good condition of the materials used are evidence of the high quality of construction.

The building, known locally as "the big barracks", is the dominant structure along the west side of the parade ground. In virtually all respects, the Barracks has retained its original relationship to the other buildings within the fort. The museum display on the second floor, which illustrates part of a soldier's daily life, invariably attracts numerous visitors.

The Fort Lennox Barracks is also associated with the theme of the defence of Canada. After the War of 1812-14, senior British commanders had to revise their defensive strategy to deal with the risk of invasion via Lake Champlain and the Richelieu River. They decided to build a fortification on Île-aux-Noix rather than at Saint-Jean because of its clear advantages in the event of a naval assault. The Barracks contributed to the strategic role of the fortification.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Barracks resides in its formal design, its construction

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details, its use of space, and the elements that relate to its original purpose. It resides also in its relationship to the parade ground and the other buildings in the fort.

The Barracks owes its grand character to the imposing scale of its facade, but in particular to its fronticepiece surmounted by a pediment with oculus, reflecting a Palladian influence. Other distinctive features are the symmetrical composition, the regular spacing of openings, the hip roof, the five chimney stacks, the arrow slits (in the side and rear walls), and the imposing exterior stairway on the rear wall. All these formal characteristics must be preserved. If the roof is to be replaced, period materials and methods should be used to retain the architectural character. The windows with multiple small panes are a significant element of the building's composition and should be either repaired or replaced with reproductions of the originals.

The masonry walls of the Barracks are very well crafted and should be preserved. The rusticated quoins contrast with the walls, which consist of regular courses. To preserve the visual integrity of the walls, it is recommended that all pointing mortar and replacement stones be identical to the originals (in composition, colour, shape and bonding). In addition, all metal elements should be treated to prevent rusting. All wooden and brick elements included in the original structural design should also be preserved.

There are no decorative elements within interior of the Barracks. This simplicity should be maintained in any future work. The compartmentalization, thick walls, vaults and arrow slits are all indications that the Barracks may have served as a redoubt. Accordingly, it is recommended that the integrity of these elements not be compromised. Any future use of the building or any part of it should adapt to the existing layout and the period interior finishes still in place. The documentation and preservation of the five fireplaces, the metal doors and door hardware, and the rings fastened to the ceilings must still be undertaken.

Maintaining the integrity of the environment and the defensive works around the Barracks is highly desirable. The relationship of the Barracks to the other buildings within the fort has been maintained over the years. No new construction should alter its immediate environment or its relationship to the parade ground. Any new landscaping concept that would be inconsistent with the military context should be avoided.

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

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Translation