

**FEDERAL HERITAGE BUILDING REVIEW OFFICE (FHBRO)
HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

FHBRO Number:	91-40
DFRP Number:	06669
Resource Name:	Powder Magazine
Address:	St-Paul-de-l'Île-aux-noix, Fort Lennox, Québec
Construction:	1820 (start of construction)
Original Function:	Powder Magazine
Current Function:	Same
Custodian:	Parks Canada
FHBRO Status:	Recognized Federal Heritage Building

Reasons for Designation

The Fort Lennox Powder Magazine has been designated as a “Recognized” building primarily for its architectural and environmental qualities.

Historical Value

The Powder Magazine is associated with the theme of the defence of Canada. Following the war of 1812-1814, British officers had to rethink their strategy in order to stop any enemy incursion via Lake Champlain and the Richelieu River. They decided to build a fort on Île-aux-Noix rather than in St. Jean because that site offered definite advantages in the event of a naval attack. The Powder Magazine is a major component of Fort Lennox National Historic Site of Canada.

Architectural Value

This plain, solid masonry building combines the strength of the model proposed by Vauban in the 17th century with the scientific developments of the 19th century regarding the design of defensive systems. The thick masonry walls with almost no openings, the bombproof barrel-vault and the supporting wall beneath the floor were designed with strength in mind, while an ingenious ventilation system and staggered openings were intended to keep the interior of the building dry. The Powder Magazine was also equipped with a sophisticated lightning rod system. The choice of materials and quality of construction both demonstrate that the Powder Magazine was built to the highest standards of the day.

Environmental Value

Huddled in the bastion least exposed to the enemy, the Powder Magazine, which was originally hidden behind a protective wall, is now out in the open so that its pure lines can be seen at a glance. What generates interest in the Powder Magazine is equally in its exterior, which blends in with the entire fort, and the reconstructed interior furnishings. This building, more than any other, evokes the military conflicts that took place in the Richelieu Valley in the 19th century and remind visitors of the role Fort Lennox played in those conflicts.

Character-Defining Elements

- The massing and pure lines of this one-storey masonry structure, which was designed to meet stringent requirements of security and strength (for example, the entrance door is isolated from the rest of the building to minimize risk).
- The stark exterior and the inverted moulding at the top of the long walls, as those features are common to the old buildings located within the fort.
- The structural system and the building materials used for their durability: foundations (including the supporting wall) and solid walls of Chazy limestone, which is renowned for its durability; bombproof brick vault spanning the entire width of the building; wood sole plate to spread the heavy masonry load and give the building some stability (because of the high water table).
- The ingenious ventilation system that was to keep the inside of the Powder Magazine dry. The system includes staggered openings, vertical slots and ventilation corridors grooved inside the thick masonry walls.
- The lightning rod system (rods and underground tank) that eliminated the risk of explosions caused by lightning.
- The wood floor, furniture and doors and their brass hardware, elements illustrating the techniques used to prevent sparks inside the Powder Magazine.
- The relationship between the Powder Magazine and its strategic location, in the bastion the least exposed to enemy fire, as well as the other works of the fort.
- The strong evocative power that the Powder Magazine holds for visitors. Equally evocative are the reproductions of the interior furnishings and the restoration of certain damaged or lost items.

For guidance on interventions, please refer to the *FHBRO Code of Practice*. For further information, please contact the FHBRO.

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