
FHBRO Number 90-305

Prescott, Ontario

Fort Wellington Officers' Quarters

Fort Wellington NHS

The officers' quarters at Fort Wellington was constructed in 1839 as part of the fortification complex constructed by the Royal Engineers. It is operated by Parks Canada, and furnished to represent the living quarters of an officer in the Royal Canadian Rifle Regiment in 1846. The Department of Canadian Heritage is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 90-305.

Reasons for Designation

The officers' quarters at Fort Wellington was designated Recognized because of its environmental importance, historical associations, and built qualities.

The Officers' Quarters is in keeping with the character of the fort interior and helps evoke a sense of the former garrison community in the 19th century.

Built with loophole-style windows for defensive purposes, the building is related to the active defence of Upper Canada in the context of the upper St. Lawrence frontier in the post-Rebellion era, when the threat of an American invasion prompted military authorities to upgrade the principal fortifications in Upper Canada and to improve the defensible works along the Rideau Canal. Fort Wellington was a "revolt station" or a focal point for the militia in the event of a crisis. Designed to contain a kitchen and separate rooms for two officers, the building is also significant for its depiction of aspects of garrison life: the relatively luxurious accommodations would have contrasted with those of the rank and file of the period.

Restored in the early 1960s, there is some question about the extent of original material and the accuracy of the location of windows and doors. However, the general appearance and configuration are based on documentary sources and provide a good depiction of the building type.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Officers' Quarters at Fort Wellington resides in its overall form, in features expressing its function as defensible living quarters, and in site relationships.

The building is a single-storey clapboard-clad log or squared-timber structure, a long

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rectangle in plan, and capped with a hipped roof. The clapboard siding and the hipped roof form were common design features of military buildings of the period. The heavy wood structural system and the loophole-style windows were chosen to contribute to the buildings required defensible character. These features should be respected.

The building was extensively restored in the 1960s, and the majority of the craftsmanship visible at the interior and the exterior dates from that period. Surviving material from the period of military occupation includes sections of the exterior walls, portions of the roof framing and the chimneys. This material should be protected and retained. The current window and door placement may not accurately reflect the period. However, the character of the openings, largely long loophole-style windows, is appropriate to the character and function of the building. Any change to the configuration or materials should be based on documentary evidence.

The setting is simple and unadorned. Provisions for drainage and ventilation, including site surfacing, should be as unobtrusive as possible. The building's visual and physical relationship with the earthworks, the front gate and adjacent structures should be respected. Consideration should be given to reinstating the original hard surface suggested by archaeological investigation.

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