

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Collège Militaire Royal Sergeant's Mess presently designated CMR #3, was built in 1839 to designs of the Royal Engineers prepared by Major Thomas Foster under the supervision of Colonel Oldfield.

The buildings, altered with the later addition of two one-storey extensions, is the property of the Department of National Defence. See FHBRO Building Report No. 86-73.

Reason for Designation

CMR #3 was designated Recognized for its historical associations, its architectural significance and its environmental value.

Among the former of most importance are its thematic value and its role in an important stage in the community's development. CMR #3 was one of a group of buildings constructed within the walls of Fort Saint-Jean in 1839 in an effort to improve the district's defenses following the 1837-38 rebellion. While the early importance of Fort Saint-Jean in protecting the Richelieu River Valley had diminished with the building of Fort Lennox, its utility for the stationing of military personnel and supplies remained high. The construction of CMR #3 also accompanied a period of growth in the city's commercial activity and its supporting railway, canal and bridge transportation links.

One of the stages of most significance in the development of the complex was its choice in 1952 as Canada's third - and first francophone - military college. Within the new operation, CMR #3 functions as the sergeant's mess.

The building's architectural significance lies primarily in its contribution to the group value and in the quality of the craftsmanship and materials used to construct it.

CMR #3 was built as a two-storey five bay, red brick, hipped roof structure, employing a straightforward version of the classical idiom of the day. Its symmetry and visual balance has been marred by later one-storey additions to the front and to the north. The excellent condition of the original structure is testimony to the soundness of construction methods and materials employed, particularly the irregularly sized bricks likely brought from Montréal on the Champlain and St. Lawrence Railroad.

The building's environmental value lies primarily in its relatively unchanged setting and the role it plays in helping establish the character of the military complex. Though

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its relation to the buildings making up the square is relatively intact. CMR #3 also helps define and sustain the mid-19th century character of the site within the earthen ramparts, in the face of the establishment of the 1933 federal infantry, cavalry and militia training centre, and the 1952 Collège Militaire Royal.

Character Defining Elements

The character of the Sergeant's Mess resides primarily in the simple form, proportions and materials employed during construction to express its vernacular classicism.

The original characteristics of this expression include the hipped roof form, the fenestration pattern, the dressed stone foundation and window sills and the use of brick laid in common bond, and in flat arches over openings. These should be maintained where they survive.

The irregular placement and fenestration of the two additions detract from the structure's original visual harmony, as do the additions' horizontal entablatures even though these latter echo the original in detail. Similarly the addition of an external chimney stack on the building's north elevation detracts from the building's initial visual balance. Should future renovations permit, consideration should be given to removal or re-design of these visually obtrusive additions.

The interior of the Sergeant's Mess has been altered substantially. In contemplated improvements, consideration could be given to retaining surviving layout characteristics and trim where feasible.

It is important in planning future changes to CMR #3, adjacent buildings and the site, to maintain the integrity of the existing spatial and landscape relations among all.

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