

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Collège Militaire Royal Officer Cadet Dormitory, presently designated CMR #4/the Montcalm Block, and the Supply Building, presently designated CMR #6/the Gallisonnière Block, were built in 1839 as barracks to designs of the Royal Engineers, prepared by Major Thomas Foster under the supervision of Colonel Oldfield. These buildings are the property of the Department of National Defence. See FHBRO Building Report No. 86-73.

Reason for Designation

CMR #4 and #6 were designated Recognized for their historical associations, their architectural significance and their environmental values.

Among the former, of most importance are their thematic value and their role in an important stage in the community's development. CMR #4 and #6 were among 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 at this time 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 #4 and #6 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 #4 functions as an officer Cadet Dormitory, and CMR #6 as a Supply Building.

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

CMR #4 and #6 are two of four similarly designed two-storey, hipped roof, common bond, red brick structures set on stone foundations. Each of the four employs a simplified vernacular form of British Classicism, depending on proportional balance and symmetry for the quality of its expression. CMR #4 and #6, facing each other across the complex's square, are mirror images, identical in size, floor plan and exterior details. The excellent condition of the original structures is testimony to the soundness of construction methods and materials employed, particularly the irregularly-sized

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The building's environmental value lies primarily in their relatively unchanged setting, and the role played in helping establish the character of the military complex and their landmark significance. Though many of the site's ancillary buildings have been lost since the construction of CMR #4 and CMR #6, and the once-grassed square paved over for parking, their relation to the surrounding buildings is relatively intact. CMR #4 and #6 together help 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 CMR #4 and #6 resides primarily in the simple forms, regular proportions, balanced symmetry and materials employed to express the vernacular classicism of its original design.

The principal characteristics of the original design include the hipped roof form, the regular pattern of window and door openings, the dressed stone foundation and window sills and the use of brick laid in common bond and in flat arches over openings. In addition, the wooden eaves, boxed and supported on brackets on four sides, and their roofs, punctuated by four brick chimneys at the apexes of longitudinal slopes help define important formal design attributes. The rear elevation of each building holds a tower; these may have been altered during construction or after, since they are not identical, and windows introduced to them. The front elevations contain 15 bays in which windows and three transomed entrances are placed. The west elevations of both buildings were designed without windows, and have remained so to the present day. The east elevations, though designed and constructed to include three bays of openings have been altered; in CMR #4, first floor windows have been bricked in and second floor windows boarded over; in CMR #6, an original left bay door has been moved to an asymmetrical position to the right of centre.

Original attributes of the buildings' classical order, where these survive, should be maintained. Where lost, consideration should be given in future renovation to their reinstatement.

Original interior layouts of both buildings, compartmentalized within three distinct zones to monitor the comings and goings of personnel from entrances restricted to the

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Collège Militaire Royal #4 and #6 (Continued)

square, have been much altered in the intervening years. Surviving characteristics of the original restrictive layout should be maintained or reinstated, where these do not impair life safety or functional convenience.

It is important in planning future improvements to CMR #4 and CMR #6, to adjacent buildings and to the site, to maintain the integrity of the existing spatial and landscape relations. If parking needs may be met by alternative means, consideration should be given to restoration of the square's original landscape treatment.

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