

FHBRO Number 95-01

Halifax, Nova Scotia

Former Field Forge Store (No. 90)

Fort Charlotte, Georges Island

Halifax Defence Complex

The former Field Forge Store of Fort Charlotte was constructed between 1873 and 1877 for the colonial garrison of the Imperial War Department based at Halifax, under the command of Major General Hastings Doyle. The building, used by the smith to store a portable field forge, a supply of "smith's coal", an anvil, a variety of blacksmith's tools, and a stock of iron and steel for the repair of ordnance and stores, was designed by Lieutenant-General William F. Drummond Jervis and Lieutenant E. Harding Steward of the Corps of Royal Engineers. External modifications include: the addition of a brick annex at the north wall for use as a lamp room, with a single door entry at the east elevation and window in the north elevation (the latter probably the original 6-over-6 vertical sliding window assembly salvaged from the north elevation)(1894); and the re-roofing of the building and the boarding up of all openings (1990s). Internal modifications include: the bricking up of the original window on the north elevation; the installation of a work bench and shelving at the south wall of the lamp room (c. 1894); and the installation of a brick forge, chimney, ceiling mounted bellows and tuyere in the north-west corner of the former store (n.d.). The former Field Forge Store is currently the property of Canadian Heritage. See FHBRO Building Report 95-01, Volume 2.

Reasons for Designation

The former Field Forge Store was designated Recognized because of the quality of the workmanship and handling of materials as well as its environmental significance.

The theme identified for the building is the defence of the Imperial naval station during the period of heightened tension following the Trent affair of the rifled muzzle-loading (RML) gun.

The quality of workmanship is evident in the good condition of the brickwork and in the well executed design of the brick forge.

The construction of a Royal Engineers' store and latrine on the parade, north of the present building, in c.1894, and their subsequent demolition had little impact on the historic character of the site. As one of only three surface buildings on the parade inside the work until the 1890s, the former Field Forge Store is an essential component of this historic grouping of support buildings.

Character Defining Elements

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The heritage character of the former Field Forge Store resides in features expressing its function as a specialized military structure, integral to a permanent fortification for the repair of the RML and smoothbore ordnance and stores. Externally, the features which define the heritage character of this building are: the rectangular plan with a double door opening facing into the centre of the work; an operable window in each of the gable ends; a framed ledged and braced heavy double door fitted with a box lock (now removed); English bond solid brick walls with camber jack arched door and window openings; cut-stone plain bevelled window sills and door threshold; a single brick chimney stack with a double course oversailing; and a low pitched gable roof to present less of an aiming target. These features must be protected and conserved.

The surviving 6/6 double hung window assembly contains valuable information that will guide future restoration. The detailed recording and conservation of this artifact should be given high priority. The installation of accurate reproduction door and window assemblies would greatly enhance the heritage character of the building.

Internally, the features which define the heritage character of this building are the concrete floor, the plain brick wall surfaces, and the presence of a forge. Anchor holes and ghosting on the walls and floor survive as evidence of the characteristic original fittings: work benches with and without drawers, shelves, tool racks and stock racks, and original furnishings including an anvil and large water tank.

The value of the physical evidence to future restoration efforts cannot be overstated. No interim renovation of the interior should jeopardize this important historic asset.

The historic relationship between the Former Field Forge Store, entrance passage, parade, and other surviving surface buildings (Former Laboratory, Former Artillery Stores) is largely intact and unaffected by the construction and subsequent demolition of a Royal Engineers' store and latrine from the 1890's and a number of temporary wood buildings from World War I. Any change in the present arrangement, other than the cutting back of vegetation, would diminish the military character of the area.

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