

FHBRO HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT VIMY BARRACKS #B-6 (McKEE HALL), CFB KINGSTON

FHBRO number: **94-013**
DFRP number: **09407**
Resource name: **Vimy Barracks, McKee Hall, B-6**
Address: **CFB Kingston, Barriefield, Ontario**
FHBRO status: **“Recognized” Federal Heritage Building**
Construction : **1952**
Designer : **Department of Public Works, Canada (no individual identified)**
Original function : **Barracks/personnel quarters, with service rooms**
Current function : **Barracks/personnel quarters, with service rooms**
Modifications : **Addition of pitched roof; minor window and interior adjustments**
Custodian : **Department of National Defence**

Reasons for Designation

Building B-6, Vimy Barracks (McKee Hall) is a “Recognized” Federal Heritage Building because of its historical associations, and its architectural and environmental values.

Historical value:

Building B-6, Vimy Barracks (McKee Hall) is associated with the massive construction and modernization program undertaken by the Department of National Defence after the Second World War, in this case the expansion of the Communications School of the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals. Brigadier C.S. McKee served in both World Wars, retired from active service in 1945, and served as Honorary Colonel Commandant of RCCS, 1961–66. The building extends the complex consolidating the Corps and School from the 1930s. The primary themes for its historical value are (1) the continuing enhancement of modern technologies for Canadian national defence and public service after World War II, (2) the transformation of military services for new national commitments after 1945. Erected in 1952 alongside other quarters, mess and classroom buildings, the building complements the original Vimy Barracks plan.

Architectural value:

Building B-6, Vimy Barracks (McKee Hall) is a good example of a modernist hybrid of neo-classical formalism and Prairie-style accents. McKee Hall is a two-storey concrete structure clad in white-painted stucco. The originally flat-roofed mass of the block remains evident beneath an added hipped, shingle-clad roof, whose broad eaves overhang the articulated corners of the main elevation. A flat-front pedimented gable sits above the original central portico. The principal south-facing elevation to the Parade Square is a symmetrical composition centered on a double-height, flat-topped portico of six classically-arrayed rectangular pillars between end walls atop a short flight of steps, the whole standing out from the front wall and above the original roof line, protecting a principal entrance recessed from the front wall. With the exception of correspondingly recessed southwest and southeast corners, the elevations on all faces comprise two storeys of horizontal window openings on continuous lintels, accented by continuous horizontal box-profile mouldings that wrap around the building. The originally multi-paned windows for each barrack room comprised an A-B-A arrangement of a fixed central unit bracketed by two narrower double-hung sash windows, since replaced by slightly varying single-pane units in functionally similar but more evenly spaced A-A-A configurations.

In plan the building is an elongated U, with a central single-storey pavilion on the court (north) side, and flat-roofed stair blocks at its ends. The interior comprises double-loaded corridors with four-person rooms on both sides, and shared shower- and washrooms at the inside corners of the plan. Interior finishes are generally terrazzo floors, acoustic-tile ceilings and painted plaster walls, and with built-in wood-veneered

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furnishings in the barrack rooms. The central common room is a large high-ceilinged space with windows on three sides facing an open lawn. Its dominant feature is a full-height fieldstone-clad fireplace block projecting into the room from the south, with an off-centered non-functioning fireplace on a quarry-tile plinth. The interior is finished in a mid-20th century modernist recreational style with wooden paneling.

The building shares its architectural character with the adjacent barracks (B-7), and others constructed in the early period of the McNaughton Barracks to the north.

Environmental value:

The primary formal elevation of Building B-6, directly facing Forde Hall (B-16) to the south, is centered on the northern frontage of the Parade Square (or Parade Ground), a gently sloping paved quadrangle notable for its formal, functional and ceremonial roles at the heart of the Vimy Barracks. To the north, together with the mirrored plan configuration of the almost-identical barracks B-7, it encloses a grassy courtyard with paved service areas. A paved lay-by abuts the main entrance, and cropped lawns surround its other frontages. Mature trees of different species sit at or close to the corners of the building.

Character-Defining Elements

The following character-defining elements of Building B-6 (McKee Hall) should be respected:

Its role as an illustration of the expansion, modernization and diversification of the Canadian military in peacetime as reflected in:

- its essential relationship to the ongoing history of functions and facilities for the RCCS;
- its improved standard of robust, durable construction and of amenity for its users;
- the formal and functional relationship of building elevations to internal arrangements; and
- its location and formality augmenting the original plan and landscape of the Vimy Barracks.

Its combination of architectural modernism and functionalism in a durable and economical form as manifested in:

- the symmetrical plan and horizontally emphasized massing of the building;
- the symmetrical main (south) elevation, with articulated corner accents and the emphasized and elaborated principal frontage, with its projecting portico and recessed entrance;
- the general horizontal emphasis on all elevations, reinforced by the wrap-around continuity of the projecting belt courses; and
- the hybrid modernistic style, a distinctive combination of aspects of both Prairie style and modern neoclassicism.

The manner in which it reinforces the formally planned character of the setting as evidenced in:

- its formally symmetrical orientation to its site, helping define the central formal space of the original Vimy Barracks plan, and a subsidiary enclosed open space of its own period; and
- its relationship to a functionally and formally allied building group of different periods.

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

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