
FHBRO Number 94-90

Trenton, Ontario

Building 23

CFB Trenton

Building 23 at Canadian Forces Base Trenton was originally constructed as a Barrack Block in 1937 by the Department of National Defence, Engineer Services Branch. In 1983 the building was converted into offices housing Base Administration and continues this purpose. The Department of National Defence is the custodian. Externally few alterations have taken place. Internally all floors have been refitted as offices although the circulation pattern has generally been maintained. See FHBRO Building Report 94-90.

Reasons For Designation

Building 23 at CFB Trenton was designated Recognized for its environmental significance, architectural importance, and historical associations.

Laid out in the late 1920s and 1930s, and planned as Canada's principal air force land and sea plane training base, CFB Trenton was designed as a state-of-the-art modern-style military station. Built as a three storey barrack block with a semi-basement to house single service personnel, Building 23, together with Building 56, were the last completed of four identical such buildings planned as an ensemble, each sited on a quadrant of a rectangular block, and erected sequentially between 1932-37. As part of this ensemble, Building 23 is significant for being a component of the grouping of original base buildings including Hangers 50 and 51(1931), the Administration Building (1934), the Officer's Mess (1936), Hanger49 (1936) and NCOs Mess (1938).

Architecturally, the simple, classical, rectilinear plan and massing of the barracks, with its bold International Modern/Art Deco styling, feature elements and white-painted stucco finishes, reflect the functional design and construction methods favoured by the RCAF in this period. This continues internally with the surviving circulation layout.

Building 23 is associated with the post-1930s economic and social development of Trenton, the development of the RCAF as an independent wing of the Canadian military, Canadian military air training, including the WW2 British Commonwealth Air Training Program centred at Trenton, and more recently with international military, peacekeeping and humanitarian missions, as a transportation base.

FHBRO Number 94-90

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Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Barrack Block Building 23 lies in its site relationships, in its 1930s International Modern / Art-Deco style design and materials, and internally in its circulation patterns, general layout and surviving original internal finishes and stairs.

Building 23, as the south-east corner element of the ensemble of four barrack blocks which together form a prominent base orientation landmark, contributes significantly to the grid and axial planning, unity, and overall 1930s design character of the station due to its scale, form, styling and white-painted stucco finishes. Any future developments or landscape alterations should respect and not diminish this relationship between Building 23 with the other barrack blocks, and between this ensemble and the base as a whole. The flowing open space between, permitting all-round views of the barrack blocks, and with their mid block axis and long vistas terminating on the centres of neighbouring 1930s base buildings, should also be respected and maintained.

With a central pavilion block and four attached rectangular pavilion wings at each corner defining three sided courts to the north and south sides, with lightwells to the east and west sides between the wings, Building 23 is characterized by its classical, symmetric planning and International Modern / Art Deco styling as expressed by its flat roof, clean lines and painted-white stucco surfaces. Important articulating elevation elements include the projecting balconies over the principal entrance and at the wing pavilion ends, the central pavilion stair bays, and the entrance court porches should not be altered. The balconies which cast dramatic shadows should remain open and unglazed. The elevations should continue to maintain their matching design relationship with the other adjacent barrack blocks.

The barrack block maintains its regularly spaced window pattern generally with its original painted wood sash windows which should be respected and conserved. If replaced, the original dimensions, fenestration pattern and colours should be matched.

Internally, although refitted, Building 23 generally retains its original "H" plan circulation layout on the main floors, the original two stairwells with their balustrading, and the

FHBRO Number 94-90

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entrance locations at first floor level which continue the symmetric planning and design aesthetic of the building internally. These should be respected and maintained, complete with surviving original feature elements, finishes and trim, doors and fixtures.

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