

**FHBRO HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT
ALERT HANGAR (COMPRISING FIVE BUILDINGS: B121/HEADQUARTERS AND
HANGARS 9 TO 12), CFB BAGOTVILLE, LA BAIE, QUEBEC**

FHBRO Number: **05-086**
DFRP Number: **07930**
Resource Name: **Alert Hangar (comprising five buildings: B121/Headquarters and hangars 9 to 12)**
Address: **CFB Bagotville, La Baie, Quebec**
FHBRO Status: **“Recognized” Federal Heritage Building**
Construction: **1958**
Designer: **Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and Coseley Engineering Company**
Original Function: **Alert Hangar**
Current Function: **Unchanged**
Modifications: **None**
Custodian: **Department of National Defence**

Description of Historic Place

The alert hangar is a complex made up of two large double hangars connected by two covered passageways to a one-storey headquarters (Building B121) in the centre. The double hangars, which have metal siding and no windows, are used to provide shelter for all-weather fighters, while the headquarters building is a pilot centre with several windows and a more human scale. The alert hangar is located at the end of the runway in the alert area. The designation is confined to the footprint of the building.

Heritage Value

The alert hangar was designated a “Recognized” Federal Heritage Building because of its historical associations and its architectural and environmental values.

Historical value:

The alert hangar is a very good example of joint Canada-United States involvement in the air defence of North America during the Cold War and, more specifically, Canada’s commitment to and participation in the North American Air Defence Command (NORAD). A key element of the North American defence system in Canada, the Bagotville alert hangar was part of a network of five all-weather fighter bases designed to counter surprise attacks by Soviet bombers. Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Bagotville was built in 1942 to train pilots and protect the Alcan aluminum smelter and local hydroelectric plants during World War II. The base went through a second period of development during the Cold War that made it one of the primary air defence bases in eastern Canada. The alert hangar was built at that time and is still an important building on the base.

Architectural value:

The alert hangar demonstrates excellent functional design. The standard plan developed by the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and finalized by the American firm Coseley Engineering Company has easily adapted to the specific functional needs of the alert hangar ever since the hangar was built. Utilitarian and uncluttered in appearance, with simple, imposing massing, the alert hangar has all the characteristics of the standard plan developed by the RCAF after World War II. The materials used to construct the alert hangar were of good quality and consistent with the standards of the day. They were assembled with care, as witnessed by their longevity.

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Environmental value:

The alert hangar is located at the end of the landing strip in the alert area, which includes the two double hangars, the headquarters building, the apron and a large fenced area of grass. No changes have been made to the alert area in which the alert hangar is located since the hangar was built in 1958. With its prominent scale and military appearance, the hangar defines the character of the warning area and reinforces the character of Canadian Forces Base Bagotville. The building is well known to base personnel. However, because it is located inside the alert area and away from the rest of the base, few people have access to it. The hangar is visible from the road that runs across the base, but the public is still largely unaware of its role.

Character-Defining Elements

The following character-defining elements of the alert hangar should be respected:

The original role of the building in the context of the Cold War and its association with NORAD, as evidenced by:

- the continuity of its function, its design and its isolated location on the base.

Its excellent functional design, as illustrated by:

- the fit between the standard plan and the specific functional needs of the alert hangar ever since the hangar was built;
- the doors at each end that allow aircraft to start their engines, exit the hangars and move into position for take-off under their own power without wasting any time;
- the opening mechanism that allows the doors to be opened quickly and efficiently despite their large dimensions and weight;
- the location of the headquarters building at the core of the complex, which allows the pilots to live completely independently in the immediate vicinity of their aircraft.

Its aesthetic design, which has all the characteristics of the standard plan developed by the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) after World War II, namely:

- the spare utilitarian appearance and the simple, imposing massing of the two double hangars, which contrasts with the human scale of the headquarters building;
- the clarity, symmetry and almost schematic look of the plan, which is directly linked to the function of the building;
- the plain facades, which are enlivened only by the rhythm created by the layout of the doors, the low-pitched roof and the corrugated metal siding.

The use of standard materials of the day that were durable, good quality and assembled with care, as evidenced by:

- the choice of functional industrial materials;
- the use of corrugated steel siding as the primary exterior finish;

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- the overall good condition of the building, which continues to function well.

The way the alert hangar defines the character of the alert area, reinforces the character of the base and plays a role as a familiar element in the neighbourhood, as manifested by:

- the alert area defined by the two double hangars, the headquarters building, the apron and the large fenced area of grass;
- the compatibility of the function of the alert hangar with the function of the base;
- the visibility of the building from Highway 170.

For guidance on interventions, please refer to the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*. For further information contact FHBRO.

May 2006