

FHBRO Number 88-161

city of Québec, Québec

**Former Ordinance Store (Building No. 14)**

Military Mess

La Citadelle, city of Québec

The Former Ordinance Store (Building 14) was built between 1852 and 1857 by a private entrepreneur from plans drawn up by Royal Engineers. One of the three extensions at the back may date from 1840 – it might have been used as an armourer's workshop; the other two are more recent than the Store. In 1949, Building 14 was converted to a Military Mess as part of the restoration of the Citadelle. The entrances and many of the windows and loopholes were modified, and the interior of the building was modified to accommodate the new use. Building 14 is located in front of the south curtain, along the parade ground, and between the Men's Barracks (Building 17) and the Mixed Barracks (Building 2). It is a component of the Citadelle of the city of Québec, a national historic site. The building is owned by the Department of National Defence. See FHBRO Report 88-161.

**Reasons for Designation**

The former Store was designated a "Recognized" Federal Heritage Building because of the important historical theme with which it is associated, its architectural qualities and its environmental value.

Building 14 is associated with the defence of British North America as the Citadelle was completed between 1839 and 1857 to thwart the constant threat of American invasion. The strategic position it held in the fortress allowed it to strengthen the line of defence on the southwest front.

The former Store is in the "utilitarian" style common to British military buildings constructed in Canada in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its original dual function, as a warehouse for cannons and munitions and as a defence for the Citadelle in the event of an invasion, is still evident in the vaulted interior spaces and the back wall pierced with loopholes. Its fine state of conservation proves that it was built with quality materials and appropriate building techniques.

Because it stretches along the parade ground, the Military Mess is one of the most visible buildings at the Citadelle. Together with neighbouring buildings, it strengthens the historical and military character of the site.

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**Character-Defining Elements**

The heritage value of the former Ordinance Store stems from its dual function as a defensive facility and an artillery-proof storage facility. It also stems from its “utilitarian” style, the building materials and techniques used, and its relationship to the surrounding buildings and the parade ground.

The Military Mess is a long, rectangular, two-storey masonry building with a hip roof and two chimneys. The roof is covered in sheet copper assembled with wood batten seams; downspouts, also in copper, are featured on all elevations. The long façade is symmetrical, and the small-light windows are evenly spaced. Of the ornamental details that soften the military look, only the band marking the upper floor and the wide quoining are part of the original design. The small neo-Classical porches and the large window bays on the ground floor date from the 1950s. It is recommended that the harmony of composition be preserved. Modifications related to the change in the function of the building in the 1950s are a new layer in the history of the building and must be respected.

As many other buildings at the Citadelle, the exterior walls of the Former Ordinance Store are constructed of regular coursed, smooth cut limestone. The stone of the side and back walls is rougher. The stone around some of the windows and loopholes is different, which creates a decorative effect inconsistent with the simplicity of the original design. It would be best to respect the solemn character of the original composition and to minimize alterations to period fabric. Replacement stones should be based on existing, period stones in terms of colour, texture and type of installation. This approach should be followed for the masonry, roofing materials, doors, windows and gutters. All of these elements play an important role in defining the architectural character of the building.

Originally, the rear wall contained only loopholes. Windows were installed when the function of the building was changed in 1949. The loopholes (and any remnants of them) should be preserved, as they convey the original function of the building. One of the three small outbuildings (an old armourer’s workshop) on the rear wall of the Military Mess (the one located nearest the ramparts) predates Building 14. It should be preserved for historical value. Historical research could help explain this period of occupancy of the site.

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Unfortunately, the interior of Building 14 has been significantly altered. The division of space, the thick walls, the vaulted bombproof ceilings and the loopholes (and their remnants) should nevertheless be preserved, as they are directly related to the original function of the building.

The relationship between the Military Mess and the parade ground and neighbouring buildings is an integral component of the mess's heritage value. It is therefore desirable that the building's associated landscape remains unaltered through the construction of new buildings. Efforts should also be made to avoid introducing landscaping features or exterior furnishings that would obscure the fundamental military nature of the site.

For guidance on interventions, refer to the *FHBRO Code of Practice*.

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