

FHBRO Number 88-161

Québec, Quebec

Former Officers' Barracks

Commandant's Residence and Officers' Mess (Building No. 18)
The Citadel, Québec

The Commandant's Residence and Officers' Mess (Building No. 18) occupy eight bays of the former Officers' Barracks (located beside Mann's Bastion); the other seven bays belong to the Governor General's Residence (Building No. 28).

The Former Officers' Barracks was constructed in 1831 under the supervision of Elias Walker Durnford. In 1872, the Governor General of Canada took over the northeast section to use as his secondary residence. A number of additions were subsequently built along the northeast side elevation. Those additions were destroyed by a fire in 1976 that also damaged a section of the original building. That section has been rebuilt; it is today used as the Governor General's private residence. Building No. 18 is currently used as the Commandant's Residence and Officers' Mess. The building sits parallel to the parade ground at the north end of Mann's Bastion. The Commandant's Residence and Officers' Mess (Building No. 18) are part of the Citadel of Québec, a National Historic Site. The building is managed by the Department of National Defence. See FHBRO Report 88-161.

Reasons for Designation

Building No. 18 has been designated "Classified" because of its great historical value and its architectural and environmental significance.

The Former Officers' Barracks is associated with the defence of British North America during the period following the War of 1812. The building, which served as a curtain wall linking Mann's Bastion and the King's Bastion, was an integral part of the defensive system of the fortress. From the standpoint of local history, Building No. 18 bears witness to the impact the military presence had on the administration of Québec in the last century and also on local development.

The Former Officers' Barracks is an elegant, two-storey building featuring many decorative elements which are neoclassical in style. Inside, the building has many period decorative elements that reflect its importance at the Citadel. The functional design of the building was intended to meet two different requirements. The building served as a curtain wall (hence the thick walls at the back and the bomb-proof vaults) and living quarters for the officers. Its good condition shows that it was built with quality materials using proper construction techniques.

Elias Walker Durnford, who supervised the design and construction of the Citadel from 1818 to 1831, is a leading figure in the history of the fortress. He is credited with all the defensive works at the Citadel. The Former Officers' Barracks was an integral part of those works.

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Standing parallel to the parade ground, Buildings No. 18 and 28 together form one of the most striking architectural elements at the Citadel. They highlight the strong historical and military character of their setting.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of Building No. 18 resides in its architectural and functional design, its neoclassical style, the building materials and construction techniques, and its relationship with the other defensive works at the Citadel.

The Former Officers' Barracks (Building No. 18 and part of Building No. 28) is a long, two-storey masonry building with a hipped roof pierced by several stone chimney stacks. The building's symmetry and regularly-spaced bays reflect the British classical style. It features neoclassical elements, including pilasters supporting a continuous cornice, and smoothly finished stone. A lightwell along the front of the building lets light into the basement. Although reminiscent of the neoclassical style, the white, painted-wood porches are of more recent construction.

Originally, Building No. 18 and part of Building No. 28 formed a single building, the Former Officers' Barracks. It is therefore essential that the architectural integrity of the building be preserved in its entirety. It is also recommended that the balance of the composition not be altered, that no new ornamentation be added and that no annexes be built that would change the balance of the existing architectural masses.

In order to preserve the masonry, all the metal elements should be protected from corrosion and the gutters should be checked to make sure they work properly. The old ironwork (shutter hinges and hooks to support the gutters) should be preserved for their interpretive value. Replacement stones should be identical to the old ones in type, size, colour and bond so as to preserve the architectural character of the building. For the same reason, the original design of the roof, windows, storm windows and gutters should be respected. The protective grilles should be the same throughout, and of a plain style, in keeping with the simplicity of the overall design. The installation of exterior light fixtures should not undermine the integrity of the historic materials; it is recommended that a design compatible with the style of the building be chosen.

Because it once had to serve as a curtain wall in addition to housing the officers, the Former Officers' Barracks features a defensive-type system of construction which includes the compartmentalization of the interior space and thick walls and vaults to make the building more bomb-proof. The building has many windows that let a great

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deal of light into the spaces that were used as officers' quarters. It is recommended that the integrity of these characteristic features be preserved because they are associated with the original uses of the building.

The rooms inside Building No. 18 are laid out symmetrically on either side of a central corridor. This configuration is an integral part of the heritage character of the building and should be respected. There are also period ornaments that reflect the high standing of building within the fortress. Examples include the beautiful foyer and its grand staircase, the extensive woodwork, the mantelpieces, the leaded windows, the fanlight transoms and the plaster ceiling moldings, not to mention the many pieces of furniture that enhance the hushed atmosphere of the common areas. These architectural ornaments are an integral part of the historical significance of the building and should be handled with utmost care. The structural elements, in particular the columns supporting the floors that are visible in some locations, should be preserved. It is important to try to use only authentic elements and avoid adding false columns or other "old-style" modern ornaments.

The landscaping and stone curbs that are part of the historic fabric of the building should be preserved for their architectural and symbolic value. It is recommended that a method be found of integrating modern functions without undermining the integrity of the setting of the Former Officers' Barracks (there may be a better way of camouflaging the kitchens and storage areas hidden behind the stone wall of the old stables). Finally, it is recommended that the existing link between the former Officers' Barracks and the defensive works of the fortress, in particular the King's Bastion and Mann's Bastion, be maintained.

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

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Translation