

FHBRO HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

3/CAMBRIDGE MILITARY LIBRARY, ROYAL ARTILLERY PARK, HALIFAX, NS

FHBRO number: **90-005**
DFRP number: **02916**
Resource name: **Cambridge Military Library (Building 3)**
Address: **Royal Artillery Park, Halifax, NS**
FHBRO status: **"Recognized" Federal Heritage Building**
Construction: **1885-1886**
Designer: **Royal Engineers**
Original function: **Garrison library**
Current function: **Library and meeting hall**
Modifications: **Small rear (east) addition (sunroom) - 1940s**
Custodian: **Department of National Defence**

Description of Historic Place

The Cambridge Military Library is a distinctive, irregularly shaped two-storey brick building composed of a gable-roofed section with a one-and-a-half storey "L"-shaped section with a hipped roof and dormers extending eastward. A small gabled sunroom was added to the eastern elevation. The Cambridge Military Library is located at the southernmost point of the "V"-shaped grouping of Buildings no. 1, 2, 3, 10-12 and 8 at Royal Artillery Park. The designation is confined to the footprint of the building.

Heritage Value

The Cambridge Military Library is a "Recognized" Federal Heritage Building because of its historical associations, and its architectural and environmental values.

Historical value:

The Cambridge Military Library is a very good example of the national theme of Imperial defence, specifically the land-based defence of the Halifax harbour and of the Royal Navy Dockyard by the British army, and of the sub-theme of garrison life or the accommodation and social aspect of military life. The library is an early example of what became official British policy for its overseas garrison of providing social, recreational and educational facilities for the troops in active service in an attempt to raise the quality of life.

One of the first buildings at Royal Artillery Park to be built of brick, the Cambridge Military Library is a very good example of the early phase of the period of general modernization and consolidation of the Halifax defence installations. The relocation of the garrison library to this purpose-built building gave the library collection a permanent home and was an indication of the importance of Royal Artillery Park among the various garrison facilities in Halifax. The library served the larger military community of Halifax and was also used by the wider public community of Halifax as a center of social liaison, and as such, represents a major turning point in garrison life.

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Architectural value:

The Cambridge Military Library is a very good example of a garrison library as a functional building type. A distinctive and irregularly shaped building composed of an assemblage of dissimilar parts; the building's unique configuration and massing reflect the functional requirements of the library. Constructed of high quality materials and craftsmanship, the Cambridge Military Library is also notable for its aesthetically pleasing design and is characterized by a distinctly residential character and scale.

Environmental value:

The Cambridge Military Library strongly reinforces the military character of the campus setting of Royal Artillery Park. An integral component of Royal Artillery Park, the Cambridge Military Library has influenced the scale and type of buildings in the surrounding neighbourhood, which consists primarily of residential and low-rise commercial buildings. The Officers' Married Quarters is a visually prominent and well-known local landmark owing to its large scale, formal design features, materials and location as part of Royal Artillery Park, as well as its symbolic value to the community as part of Halifax as a garrison town.

Character-Defining Elements

The following character-defining elements of the Cambridge Military Library should be respected:

Its aesthetic design, very good functional design, and its high quality materials and craftsmanship as manifested in:

- its well-proportioned composition and overall silhouette which consists of an irregular assemblage of dissimilar units;
- the massing of each individual unit and the distinctly residential scale and character of the building;
- its unique layout in which the administrative, social and library areas are segregated with efficient access provided between these functional areas;
- the well-crafted and aesthetically pleasing design of the interior spaces and elements including the vaulted ceiling with dormer lightwells, the exposed roof trusses which are bolted and strapped together, the glass-front wood bookcases, end fireplace and rich carpeting; and,
- the durable and well-crafted brickwork on the exterior of the building including the corbelled friezes and verges.

The manner in which the Cambridge Military Library reinforces the military character of the campus setting of Royal Artillery Park, and is a well-known local landmark as evidenced by:

- its materials and the quality of its design features and craftsmanship which are similar to those of Building 2/Officers' Married Quarters;
- its residential scale and massing which are in keeping with the other remaining Royal Artillery Park buildings, and which have influenced the scale and type of buildings in the surrounding neighbourhood; and,

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- its visual landmark value owing to its scale, design features, materials, and location as part of Royal Artillery Park; and,
- its symbolic landmark value as a result of its importance to the larger military community, and its use by the wider public community as a center of social liaison at a time when Halifax was a garrison town.

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

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