

Québec, Quebec

Former Guards' Quarters

Building No. 24

The Citadel, Québec

The Former Guards' Quarters were constructed in 1846 from plans attributed to the Royal Engineers. The entrance and part of the passageway leading to the main section of the building were modified in 1848, and some of the vaults have apparently been rebuilt using modern construction techniques. Building No. 24 is located inside the west counterscarp and is currently vacant. Building No. 24 is part of the Citadel of Québec, a National Historic Site. The building is under the jurisdiction of Parks Canada. See FHBRO Report 88-161.

Reasons for Designation

Building No. 24 has been designated "Classified" because of its historical significance, its fine design, the quality of construction and its environmental significance.

The Former Guards' Quarters are associated with the defence of British North America during the period in which the Citadel was completed (1839-1857). They were the first and largest building constructed in that period to reinforce the defensive capacity of the west corner of the Citadel outside the wall. From the standpoint of local history, Building No. 24 accentuates the military character of the Citadel, which had a major impact during the last century on the civilian administration of Québec and also on local development.

The Former Guards' Quarters were constructed to serve as a guardhouse and to command the lower ditch with artillery fire. That is why the building was partially camouflaged within the counterscarp; all that was left exposed was a facade with embrasures and the west side wall. This careful construction demonstrates the skill of the craftsmen involved in the undertaking and the wise choice of materials.

Building No. 24 highlights the military character of the site on which it stands. Owing to the materials and design, the building blends well with the other defensive works in the fortress.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of Building No. 24 resides in its original design, building materials and construction techniques, and in its strategic location.

Two successive passageways provide access to the main building, which comprises five adjoining casemates. The entrance, located near the chain door, opens onto a passageway that leads to the privies. The second passageway, narrower and 43 feet long, leads down a slight incline to the casemates. It is recommended that this

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arrangement be respected.

Building No. 24 displays the typical features of British military buildings: functional, solid masonry construction that is particularly bomb-proof because of the use of vaulted ceilings. The stone of the main section is laid in irregular courses, while the walls and the vault along the corridor are brick. The few decorative details are the band course at roof level on the main section and the voussoirs of the five embrasures on the facade. The low-sloped roof is covered with grass, and the top is pierced with five stone chimneys.

This original design should be preserved. With regard to future masonry repairs, it would be desirable to use traditional materials and construction techniques. Maintenance of the joints should be carried out regularly and damaged stones should be replaced with stones identical to the original ones in type, size, colour and bond. To preserve the historical character of the building, the style of the doors should be in line with that of the old ones. The roof line should also be respected if sealing work proves to be necessary.

The interior of Building No. 24 comprises five casemates separated by walls that form segmental arches. One wall of each casemate is pierced by a semi-circular embrasure. The floor is battered earth. Many of the old elements have survived, including two stoves, the flues, the remains of a set of 19th-century shutters, the wooden entrance doors in the interior and the large hooks to hold the doors open at the entrance. All these original elements should be preserved.

It is also recommended that the rudimentary appearance of the interior spaces, which evokes the first use of the site, be respected. Future development of the site should make it possible to preserve all the elements that refer to the building's dual function. The grilles could perhaps be redesigned and installed on the inside of the embrasures, in keeping with the original design.

The relationship between the Former Guards' Quarters and the site (the lower ditch of the St-Louis Bastion) is a defining element of the heritage character of the building. It is important to preserve the military character of the environment and not introduce landscaping that might make that character less legible.

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

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Translation