

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

Building #26 was originally a guard house built in 1885 to plans prepared by the Engineer Branch of the Department of Militia and Defence. Situated within the still visible earthen ramparts of the 1666 and 1757 Fort St. Jean, building #26 is part of a military complex that has a history which spans three centuries. The building became part of the Collège Militaire Royal in 1952 when the college, the first bilingual college, was established on the site. The building is owned by the Department of National Defence. See FHBRO Building Report 88-1 75.

Reasons for Designations

The Museum Building (#26), formerly a guard house, was designated Recognized because of its historical association, its architectural and environmental significance, and landmark value.

The former guard house is associated with the theme of the establishment of a permanent Canadian military force as a result of the Militia Act of 1883. The former guard house was built to help meet the needs of the new Infantry Corps School located there.

The former guard house has numerous design features that reveal the influence of guard houses built by the British Royal Engineers in Canada during the first half of the 19th century. Despite the fact that the guard house was converted to a museum in 1938, the building's exterior design and interior layout remain virtually unchanged from when it was built.

The former guard house and surrounding military buildings form an heterogeneous group of military school structures, well known regionally as well as nationally. As part of the grounds of the old Fort St. Jean, the former guard house benefits from the national renown accorded to the old fort. The artifacts contained in the Museum (former guard house) relate to Fort St. Jean and the military complex's early garrison days.

Character Defining Elements

The former guard house is a one storey, hip-roofed, porticoed, stone-trimmed brick building, which is based on a rectangular plan. The steeply pitched roof with the prominent central masonry chimney add to the strong presence of the building. The proportion and shape of the building and its roof should not be altered.

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contrast with the brick walls. The masonry work is of good quality and has survived relatively well. It warrants careful maintenance, with the use of appropriate expertise for any repair and repointing. Cleaning with a gentle water wash would restore the original colour balance. The walls are punctuated with door and window openings. Their arrangement reflect the interior's functional layout. The pattern of openings as well as the original windows and doors should be maintained.

The interior layout remains unchanged from when it was built. Thick masonry walls divide the interior space into three moderately sized rooms, a lavatory, and four jail cells. Though they are small and narrow, the cells each have a window which would have allowed its occupant natural light. The original layout and any surviving finishes should be preserved.

Originally the building was part of the main entrance to the Infantry Corps School. This entrance limited access to the site by brick walls on the east and west side of the building and by a gate which was in the east wall. This east wall and gate no longer exist, although the west wall has been reconstructed. The west wall should be retained and should there be a need, consideration should be given at reconstructing the east wall and gate. The relationship of the building with other buildings within the earthen ramparts of old Fort St. Jean should be maintained.

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