

Ottawa, Ontario
Library of Parliament
Parliament Hill

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Library of Parliament was built between 1859 and 1876 to the plans drawn up by the architectural partnership of Thomas Fuller and Chilion Jones. In 1952-56, it underwent a process of restoration and modernization by Public Works Canada. It is under the care of Public Works Canada. See FHBRO Building Report 86-52.

Reason for Designation

On January 16, 1987, the library was designated Classified because it is a national symbol of outstanding architectural and artistic merit which continues to serve its historical function in support of the operation of the Parliament of Canada.

The library building is the best extant example of the work of Thomas Fuller, a highly distinguished Canadian architect. The structure is a unique adaptation in Canada of the medieval chapter house form. It is the only part of the original Parliament Building to survive the fire of 1916 and it plays a feature role in establishing the overall character of the Parliament Hill complex.

In its roles as an archival depository, the library harbours a collection which began as an initiative of Lord Simcoe, following his appointment as first lieutenant governor of Upper Canada in 1791. It presently contains a rare and specialized collection of more than 600,000 volumes, dealing primarily with parliamentary procedure, economics, finance, and constitutional law.

Character Defining Elements

All of the exterior chapter house form of the Library and the form, surfaces and fitments of its domed reading room with radiating stacks embody its heritage character. The quality of natural light in the reading room reinforces this character. As it stands this room is a fine example of sensitive adaptation; it should continue to receive equally conscientious care.

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