

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Furloft/Saleshop was built in 1830-1831. Pierre Leblanc, a contractor employed by the Hudson's Bay Company, oversaw the construction of the building. The building was constructed to serve as a retail and warehouse/storage facility. It was restored during the 1970s and is used to interpret the fort as a transshipment depot and agricultural supply centre. The custodian of the property is Environment Canada Parks Service. See FHBRO Building Report 89-04.

Reasons for Designation

The Furloft/Saleshop was designated Classified because of its historical associations, its contribution to local development, its architectural significance, and its environmental value.

The Furloft/Saleshop is part of Lower Fort Garry National Historic Site. Established by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1830, the fort represents one of Canada's largest remaining concentrations of fur trade structures.

The Furloft/Saleshop is strongly associated with the current interpretive emphasis at Lower Fort Garry, the development of the fort as a transshipment depot and agricultural centre for the Rupert's Land fur trade. The Furloft/Saleshop had an impact both locally, as it served the surrounding community for many years as a retail outlet, and regionally in that goods and produce which were produced and stored there, supplied the interior network of trading posts.

Viewed collectively, the buildings of Lower Fort Garry represent an important concentration of fur trade architecture. They reflect elements of a common fur trade building tradition, one which was based on both French and British contributions modified by functional and resource considerations. The Furloft/Saleshop along with other stone buildings at Lower Fort Garry represent the earlier construction phases at the site. The Furloft/Saleshop and its nearby contemporary, the Warehouse, are rare examples of their functional type, constructed in stone.

The original buildings remaining at Lower Fort Garry exhibit a strong visual unity due to several factors: all but two are physically contained within the perimeter walls; all but one date from the period 1830-55; and all are constructed either of stone or timber frame with stone infill. Nonetheless, within this physically cohesive unit, individual buildings, such as the Furloft/Saleshop, exert an influence on the present character of the site.

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Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Furloft/Saleshop is defined by the integrity of its exterior design and by elements of its interior which express the Georgian tradition and exhibit the standard features of the Hudson's Bay Company's warehouse design. The heritage character also lies in the contextual relationship between the building and its setting.

The Furloft/Saleshop is a two and one-half storey, rectangular limestone structure under a medium-pitched hipped roof anchored by two stone chimneys. The roof is punctured on both the north and south slopes by three gable dormers. The symmetry of design recalls the British classical tradition. Openings on all the elevations are arranged symmetrically with two entrances on the north and one on the west side. The windows are multi-pane double hung units with shutters on the ground floor windows.

The roof is covered with cedar shingles. The cedar shingles contribute to the heritage character of the building. This material should therefore be preserved.

The building features rubble masonry with the use of a massive central bearing wall of masonry in the basement. All the windows have plain stone lintels and sills, and the corners of the building are accentuated by quoins. The masonry work is an important character-defining element and warrants careful maintenance, with the use of appropriate expertise for any repair and repointing.

The interior space is essentially open and suited to bulk storage except on the first floor which formed the principal retail area. The interior is oak with pit-sawn spruce board floors. The original layout and finishes should be retained in any future interior refurbishings. Any element that shows signs of deterioration should be repaired rather than replaced.

The Furloft/Saleshop is located inside the walls in the southeast corner of the fort, and the Warehouse located directly across the grounds, at the northeast corner, echo one another in size, materials, design, and function. The historical relationship of the building to its site and adjacent buildings should be maintained.

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