

## **89-04**

Selkirk, Manitoba  
**Men's House**  
Lower Fort Garry

### **HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

The Men's House at Lower Fort Garry was constructed in 1850-54, with an annex built by 1858. Initially it was a group residence for unmarried male servants of the Hudson's Bay Company. The Men's House also served as a women's ward for the provincial lunatic asylum from 1885-86, followed by use as a stable, storage, ice-house and garage. Currently it is used for interpretive purposes. It is thought to have possibly been constructed by Belonie Gilbeault. The structure was restored in the early 1970s. Parks Canada is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 89-04.

### **Reasons for Designation**

The Men's House was designated Recognized because of its architectural significance, its environmental importance, and its historical associations.

Lower Fort Garry was established in 1830 as an administrative center for the Northern Department of the fur trade, after the amalgamation of the Hudson Bay Company and the North West Company in 1821. The buildings at the fort represent a range of fur trade building traditions and construction techniques.

The Men's House is of domestic scale and simple in design, reflecting a modest utilitarian construction tradition. The colombage pierroté wall construction is original, while renovations in the 1970s replaced the foundation, main flooring, windows and doors.

The relationship of the Men's House to the adjacent buildings is relatively unchanged. The Men's House has a visual similarity to the annex of the Big House and is familiar as one of the interpreted areas of the fort.

The construction of the Men's House relates to the peak period of occupation of the fort and the need for more housing. It is associated with the continued development of the fort as a trans-shipment depot and agricultural supply center for the fur trade.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of the Men's House resides in the building's form, its overall

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proportions, construction materials, architectural details, surviving interior layout, and the relationship to the site and setting.

The building is a simple one-and-a-half storey structure with a "T" shaped plan. The hipped roof with gabled dormers has a central chimney. The simple massing, the roof profile and the footprint reflect the utilitarian style. The modest design has functionally-located doors and windows in an uneven five bay rhythm on the main facade. This informal order typifies the local building tradition and should be retained.

The stucco walls on a stone foundation reflect one of three traditional building techniques used within the fort. Colomage pierroté consists of timber framing, rubble infill, and stucco finish. The building was renovated in the early 1970s with a new foundation, main floor, and wood shingled roof. The structural system should be respected in any intervention, and the exterior materials merit conservation expertise and regular maintenance.

The small size of the windows and simple design of the doors are typical of the utilitarian style. The wood multi-paned sash windows and plank doors are recent but follow the original configurations and should be maintained.

The structure has retained the early back-to-back double "L" planning of the early dwelling. Restoration to the 1850s period enhanced the two-part division of space and this should be maintained. The largely original second floor and surviving early interior finishes should be preserved and maintained.

The simple landscape treatment is in keeping with the simple character of the fort landscape generally, and should be maintained without embellishment.

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