

Rideau Canal, Ontario  
**Blockhouse**  
Kingston Mills Lockstation

## **HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

The Blockhouse at Kingston Mills Lockstation was built in 1832-33 by the British Ordnance Department, to designs by Colonel John By. In 1838, the blockhouse was refitted to accommodate troops. Subsequent to the military period, alterations for residential use were undertaken. After assuming the responsibility for the Rideau Canal in the 1970s, the Canadian Parks Service restored the blockhouse to its earlier form and opened it to the public. Environment Canada Parks Service is the custodial department. See FHBRO Building Report 89-11.

### **Reason for Designation**

The Kingston Mills Blockhouse was designated Recognized because it is a rare example of a blockhouse of the period and retains many of the elements of Colonel By's original design, particularly with respect to functional design and use of materials.

Blockhouses were built in support of the Rideau Canal's defence function. Colonel By intended to build one at each lockstation, but only four were completed. Since Kingston Mills Lockstation is located at the southern entrance to the canal system, its blockhouse was a key defensive structure for the whole canal, and was one of the first constructed. It was designed to accommodate regular troops and militia assigned to protect the lockstation.

The Kingston Mills Blockhouse, situated on an open site above the canal, is a highly visible landmark.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of the Blockhouse at Kingston Mills Lockstation resides in its functional design and the use of materials appropriate to its defensive function.

It is a two storey pyramidal-roofed structure, square in plan, with an overhanging second storey. Defence-related elements of the design include loopholes in the walls, machicolations in the overhang, and a second floor entrance - originally the only entrance - reached by an exterior stairway. Since its restoration to its original barracks room configuration, the second floor interior has an open plan.

The materials were chosen to make the structure secure and durable, and the well-preserved condition of most of the building fabric attests to the high level of craftsmanship involved. The lower storey has three-foot-thick

Rideau Canal, Ontario  
**Blockhouse** (Continued)

limestone walls, unusual in this building type in Canada. The upper storey is built of squared timbers and covered with clapboard. Like the blockhouse at Merrickville, the Kingston Mills Blockhouse has tin roofing and masonry infill between the floors to provide bomb-proofing as proposed in Colonel By's original design. These features should be carefully maintained and preserved.

The blockhouse, sites on an outcrop of rock between the canal and the Cataraqui River gorge, is a dominant element in the lockstation environment. The site retains its open appearance and is visible from both the canal and the road. The character of the site should be maintained.

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