

FHBRO – Number **89-34b**
DFRP - 04338

Dorchester, New Brunswick
Towers D1, D2, D3 and D4
Dorchester Penitentiary

Dorchester Penitentiary's towers were built in two phases: towers D1 and D2 from 1909 to 1916 and towers D3 and D4 from 1927 to 1932. They were designed by the Department of Justice's architecture branch under the direction of W.L. Lawson. The towers have been modified over the years: doorways have been moved, windows boarded up, guard huts replaced. The Correctional Service of Canada is custodian of the towers. See FHBRO report 89-34.

Reasons for designation

The towers have been designated "recognized buildings" because of their architectural, environmental and local significance.

The four towers are located at the corners of the rectangular wall encircling the prison. Some are square-shaped, the others octagonal, but all are fine examples of prison tower design. The masonry shafts blend in well with the main building in terms of materials and treatment. In contrast, the guard huts are modern in construction.

The towers are one of the more visible components of the penitentiary's protection structure. One can easily tell by looking at them that their specific function is to provide a raised and protected platform from which to monitor inmates.

Character-defining elements

The heritage value of the four towers lies in their form, general proportions and architectural details, the material used in their construction and their relationship to the site.

The shape of the towers is that of a classical column, divided into three parts: base, shaft and capital. The flared concrete base and square or octagonal stone shaft are capped by a capital (platform) supported by curved stone brackets. The platform in turn supports an enclosed guard hut.

Guard huts shaped like inverted octagonal cones with gently sloping octagonal roofs top three of the towers. These guard huts have replaced the former concrete panels placed

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above the capital and the guard huts set back and topped by octagonal roofs. When the time comes to replace the guard huts, the former design should be taken into account.

The character of the masonry is part of the towers' heritage value. The texture of the freestone tower walls is accentuated by the contrasting types of stone used: wider blocks for the flared base, smaller blocks higher up and smooth stones for the corner quoins, the voussoirs in all door and window openings, and the brackets supporting the capital. The stonework is consistent with that of the walls; the details match the rest of the penitentiary and should not be altered. The stonework should be the focus of a program of regular maintenance based on the advice of conservation specialists.

The original window embrasures resembling loopholes, the recessed doors and the multi-paned windows add fine details that contribute to the overall "fortified" appearance of this design. The roofs are a defining aspect of the towers. When the roofs are replaced, research should be done to determine the appropriate materials and colour.

The original layout, which included a ground-level entrance, a spiral staircase and a raised guard hut, is typical of this type of building and should be respected. Any elements remaining from the original interior should be documented and preserved.

The simple and uncluttered situation of the towers should be conserved without embellishment. The landscape should not be modified in any way that would rob the towers of their imposing character.

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

Translation