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Kingston, Ontario
The Lasalle Block
Fort Frontenac

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Lasalle Block was constructed as an Officers' barracks in 1827 to designs by the Royal Engineers of the British Military. It has been altered over the years, with entrances blocked off, shutters removed, and a 1950s rear addition which doubled its size. A second addition in 1994 expanded the kitchen and provided a waterside terrace. The Department of National Defense is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 89-40.

Reasons for Designation

The Lasalle Block was designated Classified for its historical associations, architectural importance, and environmental and local significance.

Fort Frontenac, originally the Tête de Pont barracks, was the first of four British military complexes in Kingston and played a major role in Britain's defense strategy for Canada. The Lasalle Block is one of the oldest buildings on the site.

The Lasalle Block is a very good example of military architecture of the period. It is domestic in scale, with a simplicity of design, robust use of materials, high standard of workmanship, and spare utility typical of British military construction.

The Lasalle Block is a significant element of the fort, and its height, classical scale and appearance are compatible with adjacent buildings. It is familiar as one of several buildings comprising Fort Frontenac.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Lasalle Block resides in the building's form, overall proportions, construction materials, architectural details, surviving interior layout and finishes, and relationship to its site and setting.

The Lasalle Block is a long rectangular two-storey structure with a low hipped roof and load-bearing limestone walls. The flat-roofed rear additions, one from the 1950s, and a second from 1994, are sympathetic in mass, scale, and materials. The 1994 work introduces a particular design vocabulary that should be the basis for any further interventions at the rear of the building, to avoid adding another layer of details and forms.

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Kingston, Ontario
The Lasalle Block (cont'd)

The main facade is in smooth-finish regularly-coursed limestone, with the side walls constructed of quarry-faced irregularly-coursed limestone. Detailing consists of projecting window sills, quoins, and simple entablatures over the windows. The doors have semi-circular transoms. These details are integral to the character of the building and should be maintained. The building materials merit appropriate conservation expertise and regular maintenance.

The twelve-bay facade with its symmetrical placement of windows and doors establishes the character of the building and should not be altered. The regular rhythm of the window arrangement contributes to the balance and order of the building and is characteristic of British military construction. Window openings and doorways which are blocked alter the symmetrical balance of the facade and should be re-instated, using physical evidence at adjacent units as a basis for design. The existing six-over-six wood double-hung windows are consistent with the character of the design, however the originals were twelve-over-twelve. A return to that configuration, if the opportunity presents itself, would restore the early character of the facades. Shutters were a feature of the design and the hinges survive. These should not be removed.

The large expanse of the roof and the prominent chimneys are distinguishing features. Currently covered in red asphalt shingles, conservation expertise and historical research is recommended when re-roofing is planned in order to confirm appropriate materials and color.

The original internal cellular planning has been altered to create large open areas. Any surviving interior finishes should be identified and re-used in further alterations. Any re-design of the interior should respect the locations of windows and doors as well as the massive stone chimneys between units. Painted wood and plaster characterized the early interior and these surfaces should continue to be emphasized.

A landscape program in the 1930s improved and refined the site with lawns and trees. Landscape modifications should be limited to low, small-scale material in keeping with the formal character of the site.

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