

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

FHBRO Number 98-120

DFRP Number 04065

Recognized Federal Heritage Building

ST. ANDREW'S, New Brunswick

St. Andrew's Blockhouse

Joe's Point Road

The St. Andrew's Blockhouse was built by citizens of St. Andrew's, New Brunswick, in 1813. The designer is not known, although the British Royal Engineers may have contributed indirectly to the design. It was acquired by the Department of the Interior in 1925 and declared a National Historic Site in 1962. Work was done in the 1960s to restore the blockhouse to its original appearance. In 1993 the building suffered extensive fire damage, and was subsequently restored by the current custodian, Parks Canada.

Reasons for Designation

The St. Andrews' Blockhouse has been designated "Recognized" because of its historical, architectural and environmental significance.

Historical Significance

The St. Andrew's Blockhouse is associated with the defence of British North America against American privateers and military forces during the War of 1812. It was funded and built by local citizenry with support from militia, the only privately financed fortification built during the war. The blockhouse did not see active use during the War of 1812, except as barracks for the local garrison. It is the only extant War of 1812 blockhouse in Canada and the only extant War of 1812 defence structure at St. Andrew's.

Architectural Significance

The St. Andrew's blockhouse displays basic construction and design features common to 19th century Canadian blockhouses and intimately connected with its defence function. These features include its two-storey construction and numerous defensive details, such as loopholes and portholes for musketry and small-calibre artillery, and an overhanging second-storey from which stones and other objects could be dropped to the ground below. The interior is open and undivided, with a simple, open stairway, permitting the free movement of men and equipment. The solid construction of the blockhouse, while intended to be temporary and inexpensive, has ensured its continuing structural integrity for almost 200 years. While the 1993 fire destroyed the roof, burned off some of the shingle siding, damaged second-floor boards and beams, charred the interior walls and rounded and increased the dimensions of some of the loophole and porthole openings, the building has been restored so as to maintain its national historic site status.

Environmental Significance

While the site has evolved from a military reserve to a landscaped park, the original relationship of the building to the waterfront and the view from the building to the harbour survive unimpaired. The blockhouse visually dominates the harbour and waterfront of St. Andrews due to the open nature of the site and its location between shoreline and road. It is widely promoted as a National Historic Site.

Character-defining Elements

The heritage character of the St. Andrew's Blockhouse resides in the following character-defining elements:

- Design features common to 19th-century Canadian blockhouses and intimately connected with its defence function as a battery keep. These include the two-storey height, an artillery porthole centrally placed in each of the second-storey walls, a two-foot overhang on all sides of the second storey with machiolation loopholes cut into the overhang, musketry loopholes cut into the ground-floor walls, open undivided spaces on both stories, and a simple open stairway from the first storey to the second.
- Surviving original construction materials and methods which have ensured the structural integrity of the blockhouse through the exigencies of weather and fire. These include a wall construction of 12-inch square-hewn timbers, laid horizontally on each other and dovetailed at the corners.
- The location of the blockhouse in relation to the waterfront, its unimpeded view to the harbour, and its visual prominence on the site.

All maintenance and repair work, as well as future interventions, should respect these character-defining elements.

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