

Kingston, Ontario

**Stone Frigate (Building No. 23)**

Royal Military College

The Stone Frigate was built in 1820 by the Royal Engineers under the supervision of Archibald Fraser. The interior of the building was reconfigured in the 1870s and a rear three-storey wing added at a later date. The structure was refaced with new stone in 1965. The Stone Frigate was built as a naval warehouse and has served as a dormitory for the Royal Military College since 1876. The Department of National Defence is custodian. See FHBRO Report 93-99.

**Reasons For Designation**

The Stone Frigate was designated Recognized for its significant historical associations, its impressive architectural design and its important environmental setting.

The Stone Frigate has a strong association with the early military history of British North America. Its construction was directly related to the process of disarmament after the war of 1812. The building bears witness to the shift in the defence of Canada away from a maritime strategy to a campaign of extensive land-based fortifications and canals. After the withdrawal from Canada of the British army in 1870, the federal government established the Royal Military College (RMC) to provide a system of military education to train officers for the armed forces and militia. The Stone Frigate served as temporary home for the College when it opened in 1876, but was soon converted for use as a dormitory.

The Stone Frigate displays the high quality of design and construction typical of British military buildings. The building represents an austere interpretation of the British Classical tradition of architecture, befitting its function as a warehouse. Elements of this tradition, based on a strong sense of order, symmetry and balance, are evidenced in the building's simple form and distinguished patterning. The building is one of the best surviving examples of the work of Archibald Fraser, a Scottish-born architect-builder whose building practice spread across Upper and Lower Canada.

The Stone Frigate was the first building on the site of the present-day parade square, and therefore defined its alignment. Its smooth-dressed limestone and neo-classical architecture is unlike any other building on the square, lending it added prominence.

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### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of the Stone Frigate resides in the superior design and high quality craftsmanship of the building, and in its contribution to the character of the parade square.

The Stone Frigate is an austere example of the British Classical tradition of architecture, presenting a balanced, well-proportioned facade with a minimum amount of ornamentation. The building is a three-storey, 15-bay stone structure with a low-pitched hipped roof and projecting string courses between storeys. Any changes to the building's roof profile or covering should be based on historical documentation. The round-headed windows on the ground floor and the double-hung sash windows of the upper levels strengthen the symmetry established by the facade's central projecting entry. The functioning and material construction of these elements are integral to the building's carefully conceived design. At the end of their service life, the existing vinyl windows should be replaced by appropriate windows based on historical documentation. Although the building's original local sandstone facing was replaced in 1965, the original design and aesthetic intent has been maintained. Conservation expertise is recommended for any future masonry repairs. The solid masonry partition wall and curved stairway of the entry are likely the only remaining elements of the building's original interior and should be appropriately maintained. Any interventions which alter the building's interior circulation and access patterns through the central hallway should be avoided.

The texture of the Stone Frigate's cut stone and the restrained use of ornamentation is unlike any other adjacent building, contributing to the eclectic architectural character of the square. The simplicity of its massing and its austere design are appropriate reflections of the formal intent of RMC's ceremonial core. Any alterations to the site which obscures this relationship should be avoided.

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

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