

Halifax, Nova Scotia  
**Prince of Wales Martello Tower**  
Point Pleasant Park

The Prince of Wales Martello Tower was built between 1796-99 by the Royal Navy to the designs of Captain James Straton, Commanding Royal Engineer in Nova Scotia. Alterations to the building include the addition of a second storey entry, machicolation galleries on the parapet and minor interior modifications. The structure is currently interpreted as a part of a National Historic Site. Parks Canada is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 96-23.

### **Reasons For Designation**

The Prince of Wales Martello Tower was designated Classified for its important historical associations, its impressive architectural design and for its environmental significance.

The construction of the Prince of Wales Martello Tower is associated with the defence of the British naval station in Halifax against possible French invasion, and its later alterations with the defence against possible American aggression. Under the direction of the Prince Edward, Duke of Kent and Commander-in-Chief of the Nova Scotia military forces, the defences of Halifax were reinforced in the 1790s, including the construction of three martello towers. The tower was adapted in the 1860s for use as a magazine depot, and continued to serve a defensive role until 1906.

As the first martello tower in the British Empire, this structure was a pioneer in the development of standardized martello tower design adopted by the British military in 1804. Some later design developments of martello towers were subsequently applied to the Prince of Wales Martello Tower, most notably the magazine and bomb-proof arch and second storey entrance.

The Prince of Wales Martello Tower, which dominates its immediate park-like setting with its functional defensive character, once overlooked the harbour and the sea batteries it defended. Although earlier elements such as a picket fence, wooden guard house and wash house have since been removed, and the views of the remaining sea batteries are now blocked by mature tree growth, the tower's military character remains.

Due to its prominent location on the highest point of Point Pleasant the tower is a recognized landmark.

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**Character Defining Elements**

The heritage value of the Prince of Wales Martello Tower resides in its simple form, in the craftsmanship of its masonry construction, and in its defining relationship to its site.

The Prince of Wales Martello Tower testifies to the early development and perfection of the martello tower design and construction whose simple massing is characterized by its squat, cylindrical profile. The Prince of Wales Martello Tower displays the massive circular masonry walls, the parapet walls and the original interior divisions between the barracks and powder magazine which were characteristic of the martello towers. The tower's massing, profile and footprint should be maintained.

Later alterations to the tower sought to update the defensive capabilities of the tower by including four machicolation galleries and a projecting cordon course at the parapet level, as well as an entry on the second storey. To control dampness and to increase the tower's bomb resistance, the original three-foot thick wood timber decking of the terreplein was replaced by stone, although an identical ceiling structure remains between the first and second floors. Ongoing maintenance of the masonry structure in consultation with conservation expertise is recommended.

As currently interpreted, the tower's interior reflects the progressive changes to the structure's use and form. Evidence of the early barrack divisions and the powder barrel storage racks are important character defining elements and should be maintained.

While the mature tree growth has partially obscured the views of the harbour and sea batteries, the tower continues to exert a strong military presence on its immediate setting. Any alterations which detract from the simple, functional character of the site or from the tower's relationship to the harbour should be avoided.

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

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