

## HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

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FHBRO Number 96-24

DFRP Number 32086

### **Recognized Federal Heritage Building**

HALIFAX, Nova Scotia

### **Battery Command Post**

Fort McNab, Halifax Defence Complex

The Battery Command Post was constructed in 1940 as the command centre for Fort McNab. It was designed and built by the Canadian Department of Defence. It replaced an earlier structure on the same site. The building has remained unused since Fort McNab was closed in 1960. The Battery Command Post now forms part of Fort McNab National Historic Site. The custodian is Parks Canada.

### **Reasons for Designation**

The Battery Command Post has been designated “Recognized” because of its historical, architectural and environmental significance.

#### **Historical Significance**

As the command centre for Fort McNab from 1940 to 1960, the Battery Command Post is directly associated with the defence of Canada during World War Two and in the postwar period. During the war, Fort McNab functioned as a counter-bombardment battery, and later provided support to naval anti-submarine and fixed harbour defences. During the 1950s, Fort McNab was part of Canada’s Cold War coastal defence strategy. The Battery Command Post housed the technology for control of guns and searchlights, and for communicating with sites inside and outside the fort.

#### **Architectural Significance**

The Battery Command Post was designed to satisfy specific, diverse and complex functional requirements within a restricted space. It shares common design characteristics with command posts at other coastal defence sites, including a low, inconspicuous profile, rectangular proportions, partial underground construction, and narrow, ribbon-like observation windows with metal shutters. The building’s construction of reinforced concrete with a splinterproof roof was appropriate to its function.

#### **Environmental Significance**

The principal original site features of the Battery Command Post remain evident, including a concrete access stairway, the remains of pits which were part of the earlier command post, and the nearby Casemates and Crew Shelter. It remains conspicuous within the trace and possibly from the harbour due to its elevated position.

### **Character-defining Elements**

The heritage character of the Battery Command Post resides in the following character-defining elements:

- Design characteristics common to coastal defence sites, including a low profile, rectangular proportions, partial underground construction, and narrow, ribbon-like observation windows with metal shutters.
- Its functionally appropriate concrete construction, and in particular the reinforced concrete splinterproof roof.
- Its elevated position, providing high visibility to and from the fort and the harbour.

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*.