

## HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

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FHBRO Number 96-24

DFRP Number 32086

### **Recognized Federal Heritage Building**

HALIFAX, Nova Scotia

### **Gun Emplacement No. 1, Right Flank (includes Magazine No. 1 and Crew Shelter No. 1)**

Fort McNab, Halifax Defence Complex

Gun Emplacement No. 1 consists of a raised gun platform and an underground magazine and crew shelter. All three components were built between 1888 and 1892. It was designed by the British Royal Engineers. Modifications made to the gun platform and magazine in 1903-6 and 1938 to accommodate new guns included enlarging the stairwell and altering the ammunition hoists. A metal fire door was installed over the entrance passage at an unknown date and a heating room was added in 1913. The gun was removed in 1960 when Fort McNab was closed. The gun emplacement now forms part of Fort McNab National Historic Site. The custodian is Parks Canada.

### **Reasons for Designation**

Gun Emplacement No. 1 has been designated “Recognized” because of its historical, architectural and environmental significance.

#### **Historical Significance**

Gun Emplacement No. 1 is directly associated with the British defence of the Imperial naval station at Halifax between 1892 and 1906. It also illustrates the defence of Canada by Canadian forces from 1906 to 1960. Fort McNab served as a heavy artillery coastal defence installation from 1906 until 1945. Gun Emplacement No. 1 was one of the principal gun positions in the fort. During the Cold War period, the emplacement was used for coastal artillery training. The successive modernizations of the emplacement illustrate the technological evolution of coastal defence artillery.

#### **Architectural Significance**

Gun Emplacement No. 1 and its accompanying magazine and crew shelter are engineering works of purely utilitarian design, modified over time to meet changing functional requirements. The concrete gun platform is of standard design for breech-loading coastal artillery guns of the period. The underground magazine was constructed to meet late-19<sup>th</sup>-century standards for the safe and efficient storage and handling of shells and explosives. The magazine is of concrete construction with brick-lined vaulting. A lamp room for maintaining the lamps used for illumination is segregated from other rooms and lamp recesses are provided throughout the magazine. Two chambers for explosives storage are separated by a shifting lobby for donning special “magazine clothing”. A separate room is provided for shell stores. Hoists were provided to lift ammunition to the gun floor. An additional room was constructed in 1913 to house a heating system, replaced in 1948-9. A small crew shelter, (later used as artillery stores), is also located underground, adjacent to the magazine.

#### **Environmental Significance**

Gun Emplacement No. 1 is one of three aligned gun emplacements at Fort McNab and is conspicuous within the immediate area. In materials and overall design and scale, it is compatible with other concrete military structures at Fort McNab.

### **Character-defining Elements**

The heritage character of Gun Emplacement No. 1 resides in the following character-defining elements:

- The physical relationship and irregular footprint created by its three components: the above-ground gun platform, the underground magazine and the underground crew shelter.
- The functional design and concrete construction of the gun platform, consisting of a dias to accommodate the gun mounting, an issuing hatch with metal cover at the rear of the dias, a larger concrete issuing aperture on the south side of the platform, and several shell and cartridge recesses.
- The functional design and concrete construction of the underground magazine, consisting of an entryway flanked by concrete wing walls, a concrete stairway, a segregated lamp room, explosives and shell stores, and a separate room for the heating system.
- Specialized features, including a shifting chamber between explosives chambers, brick-lined, vaulted ceilings in the explosives and shell stores chambers and lamp recesses in all rooms and corridors.
- Extant remnants of magazine fixtures, including parts of the 1903-6 hoists, a sliding metal fire door, visible elements of the 1948-9 oil heating system, and various wall brackets and shelves.
- The crew shelter, consisting of one, small, underground, vaulted concrete room.
- The physical relationship of Gun Emplacement No. 1 with other gun emplacements at Fort McNab. All three emplacements are roughly aligned and feature similar construction materials, design and scale.

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*.