
FHBRO No. 93-39

Kingston, Ontario

MacKenzie Building, No. 16 (former Educational Block)

Royal Military College

The MacKenzie Building at the Royal Military College (RMC) was built in 1876-78. The design originated with the Department of Public Works under the supervision of Thomas Seaton Scott, the Chief Architect; local Kingston architect, Robert Gage, provided the working drawings. In 1903, the porch on the east was altered; the porch on the west was removed in 1919. The Department of National Defence is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 93-39.

Reasons for Designation

The MacKenzie Building was designated Classified because of its historical associations, its importance as a work of architecture, and because of the quality of its site.

Erected as the principal building at the RMC, the MacKenzie Building symbolizes the founding of Canada's first military college. It is also associated with the adoption of the new Canadian flag in 1964: inspiration for the maple leaf flag was taken from the RMC flag, which George F. Stanley, then dean of arts at the RMC, saw flying atop the MacKenzie Building.

The MacKenzie Building is a successful adaptation of the Second Empire style, with its mansard roof, round-headed dormers, iron cresting, classically detailed chimneys and symmetrical pavilion massing. The quality of workmanship is excellent, most notably the exterior masonry and the interior woodwork. The MacKenzie Building stands as one of the best surviving examples of the work of the Department of Public Works under Scott.

The MacKenzie Building is the centrepiece among several buildings which are organized around a parade ground and playing field, reminiscent of collegiate quadrangles. In Kingston, the MacKenzie Building is representative of the RMC.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage value of the MacKenzie Building resides in all aspects of its Second Empire design, including front, east and rear elevations plus the rear annex. Value also lies in the axial interior plan, interior features dating from the early years of the building, and in the memorial windows. The building's pivotal location is also part of its heritage character.

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The building's symmetrical pavilion massing is typical of the Second Empire style and should not be compromised. The four-storey central tower contains the main entrance, which includes a double-leafed wood-and-glass doorway with iron grilles over the glass panels, a semi-circular transom light and stone quoins and voussoirs surrounding. Restoration of the small stone balcony which used to overhang the main entrance would add to the building's picturesque Victorian appearance.

Five bays to either side of the central tower are punctured by rectangular basement windows with quoins surrounding and two floors of rectangular windows with ear-trimmed surrounds. The fenestration pattern extends to the end towers, except that the tower windows are paired. In the third floor of each tower, there is a pair of round-arched windows. The original windows (still seen in the east porch) have been replaced with aluminum sash of different profile from the original, and should be replaced with appropriate units when window replacement is planned.

The limestone walls are ornamented with stringcourses between the floors, pilasters framing the central tower, quoins framing the end towers and with elaborate window surrounds, all of which contribute to the rich Second Empire presentation.

The mansard roof, currently clad in copper, was originally covered in polychromatic slate. Missing or damaged parts of the decorative metal cornice and iron roof cresting should be restored. Classically detailed stone chimneys contribute to the building's distinctive roofline, and should be maintained.

While patterns from the main facade generally continue to the rear, several windows in the rear elevation and annex have been blinded with stone infilling, ventilators or plywood sheets. A program for window maintenance should be instituted to ensure that any future changes to windows are approached in a consistent manner.

The original interior planning of the building survives: the central entrance connects at right angles to a main hallway spanning the length of the building, and a central staircase leads to a similar hallway above. Rich detail distinguishes the interior layout and circulation: Corinthian columns; moulded wood arches; three-foot-high wooden wainscoting and six-panelled wood doors along the hallways; panelled wood embrasures; coved ceilings; magnificent double staircase; decorative iron chandeliers; and memorial stained glass windows. While the top floor is much plainer than the first

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and second floors, the six-panelled wood doors and surrounds carry the elegant quality throughout the interior. Removal of the drop acoustic tile ceiling in the stairwell, top floor and first floor senate room would enhance the heritage character of the interior.

Despite the asphalt which replaces the earlier grass surface, the MacKenzie Building retains its original relationship to the open expanse of the parade ground. This should be protected.

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