

FHBRO Number 88-161

Québec, Quebec

The Casemates

Buildings No. 3 and 22

The Citadel, Québec

Buildings No. 3 and 22, known as the Casemates, comprise more than 50 contiguous vaulted spaces within the ramparts of the west curtain wall and the adjoining walls of the Dalhousie and Richmond bastions. Building No. 22 itself is a single casemate located at the end of the Richmond Bastion casemates. The Dalhousie Gate, located in the centre of the curtain wall, is part of the complex.

Buildings No. 3 and 22 were constructed between 1820 and 1831, according to the designs of Elias Walker Durnford, then commanding officer of the Royal Engineers of Upper and Lower Canada. In the 1880s, some parts of the Casemates, including the Dalhousie Gate, were covered with a wood roof to prevent water from leaking in. Those roofs were subsequently removed. The interior of Buildings No. 3 and 22 has been modernized to accommodate the soldiers' quarters and various Royal 22^e Régiment facilities. The buildings are part of the Citadel of Québec, a National Historic Site. They are owned by the Department of National Defence. See FHBRO Report 88-161 .

Reasons for Designation

The complex made up of Buildings No. 3 and 22 has been designated "Classified" because of its historical, architectural and environmental significance.

The Casemates occupy a large part of the escarp and are therefore directly associated with the defence of British North America in the years following the War of 1812. The war ended in 1814, but the United States remained a potential enemy to Canada. Given that the ultimate goal of a possible invasion seemed to be to capture Québec, the best way to bolster the city's defences was to build a permanent citadel on the Cap-aux-Diamants heights. Buildings No. 3 and 22 were an integral part of the defence system established at the Citadel at that time. They help highlight the military role of the Citadel, which had a major impact last century on the civilian administration of Québec and also on local development.

The distinctive facades of Buildings No. 3 and 22 clearly reflect the dual function of the Casemates which served as a defence work and housing for the soldiers. From inside the Citadel, the Casemates have the appearance of an institutional building with neoclassical ornamentation, the focal point being the Dalhousie Gate. The front wall is pierced by loopholes that protected the ditch in the event of an attack. Most of the original elements of the Casemates are still present, including the escarp, the parapet, the embrasures, the loopholes and the barrel vaults. The good condition of the masonry reflects the sound choice of building materials and construction techniques and the craftsmanship of the builders. Elias Walker Durnford, who is credited with having designed and built the Casemates, is a leading figure in the construction of the

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fortress. He oversaw construction between 1818 and 1831.

The Casemates are the most imposing and best integrated complex in the Citadel. They are dominant the site in plan and are the primary structural element of the site. The Dalhousie Gate, also an integral component, is one of the key visual features of the fortress.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of Buildings No. 3 and 22 resides in all the formal elements associated with their role in defence. It also resides in the neoclassical decorative elements, the building materials and techniques used, and the integrity of their relationship to the other defence works at the site.

The defensive character of the Casemates on the ditch side is reflected in the 24-foot-high irregular masonry wall, which is in keeping with the irregular form of the fortress. At ground level, the wall is pierced by loopholes (the windows were added later and were not part of the original design). A course of stone marks the top of the wall; the roof, hidden under turf, supports the embrasures. The focal point of this vast complex, which is part of the military works themselves, is the Dalhousie Gate, a highly decorative architectural element.

The decorative elements of neoclassical inspiration contribute to the more institutional character of the facades, which overlook the parade ground. These elements include pilasters, a continuous cornice, fanlights and recessed panels. The facade is also characterized by lighter, more finely cut stone on the ditch side. The two staircases to the ramparts, located at either end of the curtain wall, are symmetrical. The wood gables over some of the doors are relatively new, but are based on neoclassical designs.

The Dalhousie Gate is patterned on the triumphal arch form. It is more imposing from the ditch side because of the Tuscan half-columns supporting the weighty capitals. On the inside, the Dalhousie Gate features simple, bas-relief, neoclassical decoration. The central bay is vaulted and sheathed in brick. The pillars are made of cut stone.

It is recommended that the architectural elements of the Casemates not be altered by the construction of additions, creation of new openings or installation of new decoration. It would be best to revert to the use of wood doors and windows, because wood, used originally, is the material most compatible with the building's neoclassical style. It would also be appropriate to stick to the original roofing materials and design. In order to

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preserve the masonry, it is recommended that all metal elements be protected from corrosion and that the gutters be checked to make sure they are in good working order. The ornamental stone on the Dalhousie Gate should, wherever possible, be restored rather than replaced. Generally, any replacement stone should match the original stone in type, size, colour and bond, so as to preserve the architectural character of the building. The protective grilles should be the same throughout and of a very simple design, in keeping with the simplicity of the complex as a whole. If exterior lighting and air conditioning units are required, they should be installed without damaging the historic fabric. It is also recommended that their design be compatible with the style of the building.

The characteristic elements of the interior of the Casemates include the thick walls, the bomb-proof vaulted ceilings and the loopholes that made it possible to cover the ditch. It is therefore recommended, in order to preserve the heritage character of this complex, that the large vaulted spaces remain visible and that nothing be done to undermine the integrity of the original walls and openings. Compatibility with the historic elements and reversibility are the main criteria for any work affecting the interior. The methods used to seal the vaults should not affect the overall appearance of the Casemates.

The defensive works originally linked to the Casemates which include the counterscarp and the west ravelin, and which afforded additional protection for the curtain wall and the Dalhousie Gate, are still standing. The integrity of those works and their relationship to one another should be preserved. An effort should also be made to avoid introducing landscaping elements or outdoor furnishings that would obscure the fundamentally military nature of the site.

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

2000.02.18

Translation