

city of Québec, Québec
Connaught Barracks (Building No. 2)
Côte de la Citadelle

Building No. 2 of the Connaught Barracks was built in stages. Between 1808 and 1814, the British army erected two small stone buildings. During the first quarter of the 20th century, a central addition filled the space between the two buildings, and a second storey was added to tie the whole together. Building No. 2 is owned by the Department of National Defence and is used as office space. See FHBRO Report 88-162.

Reasons for Designation

Building No. 2 of the Connaught Barracks was designaed a “Recognized” Federal Heritage Building for its historical significance and environmental qualities.

The Connaught Barracks bear witness to the strategic importance of the city of Québec in the colonial defence system under the British Regime. At the turn of the 19th century, the deteriorating political and military situation led authorities to increase the number of personnel in the city of Québec. Construction of the barracks met a pressing need for adequate housing of troops. The original rooms in Building No. 2 were used at that time as a kitchen and guard post. In the 20th century, the buildings were consolidated into a single two-storey building used for administrative purposes.

The increase in military personnel, which led to the construction of several buildings for their exclusive use, had a major impact on the urban fabric as well as the economic, administrative and social life of the city. Soldiers consumed goods and services and contributed to municipal services that were sometimes lacking. However, they also attracted taverns and brothels that disrupted community peace.

Building No. 2, which now stands at the entrance of the throat of the Saint-Louis Bastion, Quebec City’s old defence system, is an important part of the military landscape of Upper Town. Due to its location close to the Saint-Louis Gate, the Garrison Club and the entrance to the hill leading to the Citadelle, the building profits from excellent visibility. The Connaught Barracks are also part of the historic district of Old Quebec City, which was created in 1963 and declared a “World Heritage Site” by UNESCO in 1985.

Character-Defining Elements

The heritage value of Building No. 2 lies in its footprint and massing, the choice of

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materials, its architectural details and its excellent integration into the surrounding urban environment.

The two-storey building consists of a rectangular main section to which a more compact building is attached on the north side. The exterior treatment and roof-lines of the two sections are different, heightening the illusion of two interlocking buildings.

The quarried limestone façade of the ground floor main section contrasts with the white stucco used on the upper floor. The rear elevation, meanwhile, is all stucco. This section of Building No. 2 has a gable roof covered with sheet copper assembled with wood batten seams. Different periods of construction can be delineated in the limestone walls of the other part of the building. This section has a gable roof with a hip on the north side. As in the barracks at the rear, materials convey the history of the building, and should be preserved. Repairs to the roofs and chimneys should follow recognized traditional techniques.

The main façade is compatible with its entranceway, dormers and large multipane windows. The elevation overlooking the yard has a more functional look; the only decorative touches are multipane windows and pedimented awnings over the doors. These architectural details merit protection. However, because the windows are recent additions, which do not appear to be the same size as the old ones, it would be best to base the design of new windows on original models once replacement becomes necessary. It would also be worthwhile to seek a more compatible solution to the existing metal post system, for supporting the awning over the main porch.

The masonry walls of Building No. 2 show many signs of repairs and modifications to the openings. To avoid a patchwork effect, replacement stones and new joints should be carefully matched to the construction of the old walls. The wood components should always be sealed, and the parging should be inspected regularly.

Inside, only the window frames and the openings in the partition walls to permit horizontal circulation recall the original use. Rooms have been refurbished to meet modern needs; the original layout is gone, and the old finishes have been covered or removed. A careful stripdown may reveal some interesting detailing and restore the period feel, but that process would have to be compatible with the viability of the building.

Without the cannons mounted in the grassy area in front, this military building could be

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mistaken for a middle-class house from the last century. Ideally, the building should be maintained in its current state. The building is fully compatible with urban setting. The courtyard is currently needed as a parking lot. However, a buffer zone could be created between the wall of the building and the asphalt to permit a better appreciation of the building.

For more information, please refer to the *FHBRO Code of Practice*.

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