

FHBRO Number 91-53

Hull, Quebec

**Gilmour and Hughson Limited Office**

Jacques Cartier Park

The Gilmour and Hughson Limited Office was built in 1892 by an Ottawa mason, Richard Lester, to serve as the administrative headquarters for this forestry company. The addition located at the rear was built at an undetermined date. The building is now the property of the National Capital Commission. See FHBRO Building Report 91-53.

**Reasons for Designation**

The Gilmour and Hughson Limited Office was designated Recognized for historical reasons and for its architectural, design and workmanship qualities.

The history of the Gilmour and Hughson Limited Office is closely linked with the history of logging in the Ottawa Valley between 1850 and 1925. The Gilmour and Hughson families are recognized for having played a major role in the lumber trade, not only locally, but across North America. This industry was the driving force of Hull's economic development. The Gilmour and Hughson Limited Office is one of the last tangible pieces of evidence of this historic role.

This stone building, whose plan is dominated by an imposing vault and a dual-hearth fireplace, was designed as a utilitarian building. The choice of quality materials - some of which reportedly came from the construction sites of the East and West Blocks of Parliament Hill - and carefully crafted details lend it its unique character.

**Character Defining Elements**

The heritage value of this building is defined by its compact architectural form, which reflects a specific spatial organization, appropriate building materials and techniques, as well as some unusual decorative elements.

The Gilmour and Hughson Limited Office is a square two-storey building topped by a truncated hipped roof. The decision to use solid masonry walls for this administrative building which housed a vault was quite appropriate. The building's internal organization is reflected in the elevations. They are all different and, with the exception of the eastern wall, are asymmetrical. At the rear, the small addition in the form of a lean-to hides part of the original wall. Because these composition principles and forms define the character of the building, they merit preservation. However, it would be appropriate to restore the two doors on the eastern side of the addition. More detailed

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research on the circumstances of the construction of this addition would help improve our knowledge of the history of the building.

The original building walls are made of squared stones laid in irregular courses with quoins. Two bands of potsdam limestone encircle the building at the level of the foundation and at two feet from the roof. The chimney, sills, lintels and chain bonds of rusticated stone around the openings are all architectural details that should be preserved. The same applies to the unusual decorative elements, such as a gargoyle located above the main entrance, as well as the medallions and the sculpted roses, which add a whimsical note. A better solution for the steps and landing at the entrance and for the main door would improve the perception of the building. It is recommended that the necessary structural repairs be carried out before repairing the damaged masonry walls. The new joints should faithfully reproduce the originals and the mortar should be of the same type. Any stones that are irreparably cracked should be replaced by stones of the same type and the clumsy repairs redone in a proper manner.

The wooden sash windows define the architectural character of this building and should be preserved. Regular maintenance is the best guarantee of their longevity. The same comments apply to the eaves. If certain rotten boards must be replaced, the new ones should be similar to the originals.

The ground floor is organized around a central masonry vault; its metal door still has its hardware. Some of the other important interior elements are the dual-hearth brick fireplace, located between the principal room and the closed office, as well as the open staircase leading to the second storey. These elements, which were decisive in the placement of the openings, are essential to the building's integrity. They should therefore be left intact, even if the function of the site should change. The mantelpieces should be repaired only after the structural defects have been corrected.

Many of the original finishing materials are still in place. These include, in particular, the pine floors, the tongue-and-groove wooden wall panelling, the window mouldings and openings, and the wooden ceilings. They should all be preserved. The broken and missing wood trim could be replaced by identical elements. It is also recommended that lighting fixtures compatible with the original decor be chosen.

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

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