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Amherstburg, Ontario
Commissariat Office
Fort Malden NHS

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Commissariat Office was constructed with two offices for the pay and fuel officers in 1831-32. It was designed by Captain Philpotts of the Royal Engineers. The Commissariat Office was restored by Parks Canada in the 1980s. Parks Canada is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 91-181.

Reasons for Designation

The Commissariat Office was designated Recognized for its architectural importance, its environmental significance, and its historical associations.

The Commissariat Office is a very good example of the standardized bungalow constructed by the British military during the 1830s, with its symmetrical compact form and domestic scale. Restoration involved removal of front and rear frame additions and masonry infill, and reinstatement of certain window openings.

The Commissariat Office is a focal point of the site, reinforcing the historical character of the King's Navy Yard Park. The building is familiar as part of a national and local landmark.

The building illustrates the presence of the military in the former reserve area near the center of Amherstburg. The Commissariat Office administered local service contracts to the military and relates to the economic development of Amherstburg from 1830-1850.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Commissariat Office resides in its form, overall proportions, architectural details, construction materials, surviving interior layout, and relationship to the site and setting.

The building is a long rectangular one-storey structure with a low hipped roof and prominent end chimneys. The well proportioned bungalow design, rectangular footprint, simple massing and roof profile should not be compromised.

Symmetry is an important feature of the design. The door with its fanlight is centered

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Amherstburg, Ontario
Commissariat Office (Continued)

between four twelve-over-twelve windows which add balance and texture to the facade. The arrangement of the facades should not be altered.

The building is characterized by the simplicity of its materials and detailing. The brick walls sit on a dressed stone ledge which caps a rubble stone foundation, and openings have simple brick voussoirs and stone sills. The masonry, including the massive chimneys, merits regular maintenance and conservation expertise. The vocabulary of traditional materials is compromised by the current asphalt shingle roof, which is an inappropriate material. A return to the appropriate historic material (sheet copper, to be confirmed by research) would improve the character of the building.

Most of the windows, frames and iron bars were extant and were refurbished during the restoration. These should continue to be retained. Recent photographs indicate an aluminum storm door which is inappropriate in scale and materials. The integrity of the building would be improved by removing it, and if necessary replacing it with a door sympathetic to the original design.

The original layout has been altered by the demolition of the central storage vault and vestibule, resulting an open interior. The original interior finishes, wood plank flooring, interior trims and plasterwork are largely intact and should be preserved. The simple stone steps and metal handrails are generally consistent with the character of the design and should be retained.

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