

Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario  
**Tower**  
Fort Mississauga

## **HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

The Tower was built in 1814-16, to designs by the Royal Engineers, as part of the development of Fort Mississauga during and after the War of 1812-14. Since 1969, stabilization and repairs have been undertaken, and the structure is open to the public. Environment Canada is the custodial department. See FHBRO Building Report 89-17.

### **Reasons For Designation**

The Tower was designated Recognized as a result of its association with the defence of Upper Canada, for its functional architectural qualities, and for its contribution to the military character of the setting.

Fort Mississauga was built by the British, for the defence of Newark (now Niagara-on-the-Lake), after the destruction of Fort George in the War of 1812-14. The Tower was designed to function as a fire- and bomb-proof central keep within the star-shaped earthworks, and initially housed a small artillery corps. During the 1837 Rebellion, it was refitted to accommodate 50 soldiers, and was again repaired at the outbreak of the American Civil War. Thus, the Tower is associated with the initial and on-going defence of Niagara-on-the-Lake and the town's continuing economic development.

The Tower, while similar in function and overall design to a Martello tower, is unusual in its square plan. The structure, rising above the remaining earthworks, is a well-known landmark.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of this structure is defined by its massing, defensive design elements, and its materials and craftsmanship.

The Tower is a two-and-a-half-storey square structure, with thick slightly-tapering brick-clad stone walls, and flat (modern) roof. The heavy massing, loopholes and single raised entrance reflect the defensive function of the tower.

Although the interior vaulting has been removed, the walls are a good example of the careful craftsmanship exhibited in buildings constructed by the Corps of Royal Engineers. Despite the use of brick and stone apparently scavenged from the ruins of

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Newark, and later years of neglect, the massive masonry walls remain in very good

condition, with only the surface parging showing signs of deterioration. Given the importance of the materials and craftsmanship to the heritage character of this structure, these elements should be carefully maintained and preserved.

The fortification overlooks the Niagara River. Access to the tower, located within the surviving earthworks, is by means of a caponier tunnel, an important related element.

The tower reinforces the military atmosphere of the fortification, and is a regional landmark.

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