

Rideau Canal, Ontario
Defensible Lockmaster's House
Jones Falls Lockstation

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Lockmaster's House at Jones Falls was built in 1841 by the British Ordnance Department as a defensible residence for the lockmaster. In the early 1980s, period restoration, involving the replacement of missing and deteriorated building components, was undertaken by the Canadian Parks Service. Environment Canada Parks Service is the custodial department. See FHBRO Building Report 89-156.

Reason For Designation

The building was designated Recognized as a result of its historical associations, design, craftsmanship and materials, and its environment.

The Lockmaster's House at Jones Falls was built as a defensible residence in support of the military defence role of the Rideau Canal. Peter Sweeney, lockmaster from 1839 to 1871, documented the early history of the canal operation in his personal diary, and, as a result, has become the focus of the interpretive program at the lockstation.

The form of the house represents the original, unaltered appearance of its type, while the exterior masonry walls reflect the careful craftsmanship of the Royal Engineers. As a result of period restoration, the interior plan now reflects the original layout of this type of dwelling.

The site of the building on a promontory overlooking the canal makes the house a significant element in the scenic historic environment.

Character Defining Elements

The Lockmaster's House at Jones Falls is one of the few defensible lockmasters' houses retaining the original functional form - a single storey, hipped-roof structure with simple cubical massing and symmetrical front facade. The surviving fabric includes most of the stone masonry walls, the roof framing and the floor. The carefully constructed stone walls reflect the high standards of the Royal Engineers and a local civilian contractor. During exterior restoration, two windows and a doorway cut through the original masonry walls in the late 19th century were infilled. New casement windows, wooden loopholes, tin roofing, and frame defensible porches have been installed.

Restoration of the interior involved construction of a new fireplace, several new partition walls and new plaster finishes. The current division of the interior into four rooms - sitting room, kitchen, and two bedrooms - illustrates

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the original floor plan of this building type. In its current form, the house represents a typical defensible lockmaster's house from the military era, and is interpreted from this perspective. As such, it should be maintained as is.

The natural ungroomed character of the site is similar to its appearance in the military period, although trees which now screen the view would not have been acceptable then. Jones Falls is one of the most scenic stations on the system and the Lockmaster's House occupies a prominent location in its environment. The character of the setting should be maintained.