

Rideau Canal, Ontario
Blockhouse
Newboro Lockstation

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Blockhouse at Newboro Lockstation was built in 1832-33 by the British Ordnance Department in accordance with Colonel By's plan to have a major defensible building at each locksite. Extensive modification were undertaken by the Department of Transport in the 1960s to recover the original historic form. This work was continued in the 1980s by the Canadian Parks Service. Environment Canada Parks Service is the custodial department. See FHBRO Building Report 89-159.

Reason for Designation

The Blockhouse was designated Recognized because of its important historical associations, its design, choice of materials, and site.

The building was constructed during the period in which the Rideau Canal fulfilled a defence role for the United Canadas, and the blockhouse building type was an essential element in Colonel By's defence strategy for the canal. A small village grew up around the lockstation at Newboro, with the blockhouse remaining as one of its oldest buildings.

The Newboro Blockhouse, although deviating from the original design by Colonel By, followed the general pattern established for blockhouses. It is one of only four completed on the canal and is one of the few surviving examples in Canada with a stone masonry lower storey.

The site retains its historic military appearance.

Character Defining Elements

The Blockhouse at Newboro Lockstation is a two storey pyramidal-roofed structure, square in plan, with an overhanging second storey. The lower storey is constructed of stone masonry, unusual in this building type. The upper storey is timber framed and clapboarded. Due to financial constraints at the time of construction, the Newboro Blockhouse never had the tin roof and wall cladding or masonry infill 'bomb-proofing' between floors proposed in Colonel By's original design. The interior retains the historic trap-door access with ladder between floors.

The renovations which occurred at the turn of the century were designed to better accommodate residential use. Subsequent modifications have returned the building to its historic appearance. Despite these changes over time, much of

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Blockhouse (Continued)

the stone masonry, the timber walls, the floor beams and the kingpost of the roof are original. The craftsmanship associated with Colonel By and the Royal Engineers is evident in the surviving masonry. It is important that the remaining original material of this building be maintained and protected.

The site retains some of its ungroomed character from the military era. The natural character of the setting at the edge of the village evokes the historic period and the blockhouse is a familiar landmark.