

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Defensible Lockmaster's House was built at Poonamalie Lockstation in 1840-41 by the Royal Engineers as part of the defence system for the Rideau Canal. A single-storey summer kitchen was added to the rear in 1899, while a second storey was added to the main structure in the first decades of the twentieth century. The Canadian Parks Service is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 91-72.

Reasons For Designation

The building was designated Recognized as a result of its historical associations, its functional design and quality craftsmanship, and the heritage character of its site and setting.

The original defensible design components of this lockmaster's house reflect the military role of the Rideau Canal in the defence of the united Canadas during the nineteenth century. This building is the only surviving residence among those constructed on the site during the military era, and hence is an important representative of that period in the community's development.

The second-storey addition, summer kitchen and interior layout reflect the emphasis on residential design which resulted from a change in the function of the canal by the twentieth century from defence to recreation and commerce.

The setting has remained essentially unchanged since the turn of the century, while the site reflects a residential character in keeping with its historic function.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of this structure is defined by the combination of military and residential design features, the high level of craftsmanship and the retained historic relationship to the lockstation.

The Poonamalie Defensible Lockmaster's House is a two-storey, hipped-roof structure, retaining an original defensible porch on the east side and the 1899 summer kitchen at the rear. It was originally a single-storey hipped-roof structure, square in plan. The addition of the clapboarded second storey maintains the simple massing, and the original symmetry of the main facade -- central door with flanking windows -- is maintained by the three upper windows.

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The structure retains the original first-storey limestone walls, the stone base of the original hearth, the first-floor heavy timber joists, and several original partition walls. While the front porch is recent, the east porch is an original defensible component attesting to the military function of the structure. The thick stone walls of the lower floor reflect this military role and the careful construction associated with the Royal Engineers. The centre-hall plan with its central staircase dates from the addition of the second-storey, and reflects the change in function from defence to simple domestic accommodation associated with the change in the role of the canal itself.

The building retains its original orientation close to the lock, and reinforces the historic character of the setting. The house is a local landmark. The overall form, historic materials, domestic character, and setting of this property should be maintained.

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