

89-04

Selkirk, Manitoba
The Big House
Lower Fort Garry

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Big House was constructed in 1830-32 as a residence and administrative office for the Hudson's Bay Company. The construction was overseen by Pierre Leblanc. The structure had been extensively altered prior to period restoration in the 1960s. It is currently used for interpretive purposes. Parks Canada is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 89-04.

Reasons for Designation

The Big House was designated Classified because of its historical associations, its environmental and local importance within Lower Fort Garry, and its architectural significance.

Lower Fort Garry was an administrative headquarters for fur trading and the focal point of the lower Red River settlement as well as an important link to Britain. The construction of the Big House reflects the consolidation of the fur trade under the Hudson Bay Company and the development of the fort as a trans-shipment depot and agricultural supply center.

The Big House is associated with George Simpson, Governor of the Hudson Bay Northern department's fur trade. He initiated the construction of the fort and the residence and office as a center from which to manage the fur trade. The house is also associated with the Northwest Mounted Police, whose initial headquarters were located at the fort.

The Big House is a very good example of a residence and administrative building designed in the British Classical tradition. The "L"-shaped structure was built in two visually distinct stages, each with a dominant hip roof and domestically scaled symmetrical facades. The annex was constructed using colombage pierroté as the structural system. Extensively altered over the years, restoration to the 1850-52 period involved replacement of much of the remaining original fabric of the building.

The Big House is part of the historic enclave defined by the perimeter walls of the fort within which all the buildings have a cohesive design and visual unity. The central location of the Big House has ensured its prominence over the years.

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Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Big House resides in the building's form, its overall proportions, construction materials, architectural details, interior layout and finishes, and its relationship to the site and setting.

The building is composed of two linked structures, both of which have prominent hipped roofs and masonry chimneys. The three sided verandah extension at the main house is a character-defining feature. The massing, overall roof profiles and building footprint should not be altered.

The Big House incorporates two of the three traditional building techniques used at the Fort: stone construction and colombage pierroté. The rubblestone walls of the main house are simply detailed with cut stone work at the openings. The colombage pierroté of the annex consists of a heavy oak timber frame infilled with rubblestone and mortar and finished in stucco. The south and east walls of the main house are original; the rest of the exterior walls have been rebuilt at various times. The simple, economical detailing of the wood verandah, windows, doors, and dormers is characteristic. The exterior is in good condition and merits an on-going program of repairs and maintenance.

The symmetrical balance and good proportional relationships of the windows and doors are typical of the British Classical style used for fur trade buildings. The large windows and doors contribute to the building's domestic character. The multi-paned wood sash windows, panelled doors and the shutters of the annex are compatible with the original design intent and should be retained.

The house was designed as a residence and administrative quarters; over the years the functional layout was modified to meet changing needs. The current layout of house reflects the 1850-52 period. Any changes should be based on physical or pictorial evidence.

The central location and scale of the Big House provide it with prominence within the fort environs. The house's manicured grounds with floral planting and a perimeter fence are in keeping with the historic character of the site and should be maintained.

1996.09.26

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

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Furloft/Saleshop was built in 1830-1831. Pierre Leblanc, a contractor employed by the Hudson's Bay Company, oversaw the construction of the building. The building was constructed to serve as a retail and warehouse/storage facility. It was restored during the 1970s and is used to interpret the fort as a transshipment depot and agricultural supply centre. The custodian of the property is Environment Canada Parks Service. See FHBRO Building Report 89-04.

Reasons for Designation

The Furloft/Saleshop was designated Classified because of its historical associations, its contribution to local development, its architectural significance, and its environmental value.

The Furloft/Saleshop is part of Lower Fort Garry National Historic Site. Established by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1830, the fort represents one of Canada's largest remaining concentrations of fur trade structures.

The Furloft/Saleshop is strongly associated with the current interpretive emphasis at Lower Fort Garry, the development of the fort as a transshipment depot and agricultural centre for the Rupert's Land fur trade. The Furloft/Saleshop had an impact both locally, as it served the surrounding community for many years as a retail outlet, and regionally in that goods and produce which were produced and stored there, supplied the interior network of trading posts.

Viewed collectively, the buildings of Lower Fort Garry represent an important concentration of fur trade architecture. They reflect elements of a common fur trade building tradition, one which was based on both French and British contributions modified by functional and resource considerations. The Furloft/Saleshop along with other stone buildings at Lower Fort Garry represent the earlier construction phases at the site. The Furloft/Saleshop and its nearby contemporary, the Warehouse, are rare examples of their functional type, constructed in stone.

The original buildings remaining at Lower Fort Garry exhibit a strong visual unity due to several factors: all but two are physically contained within the perimeter walls; all but one date from the period 1830-55; and all are constructed either of stone or timber frame with stone infill. Nonetheless, within this physically cohesive unit, individual buildings, such as the Furloft/Saleshop, exert an influence on the present character of the site.

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Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Furloft/Saleshop is defined by the integrity of its exterior design and by elements of its interior which express the Georgian tradition and exhibit the standard features of the Hudson's Bay Company's warehouse design. The heritage character also lies in the contextural relationship between the building and its setting.

The Furloft/Saleshop is a two and one-half storey, rectangular limestone structure under a medium-pitched hipped roof anchored by two stone chimneys. The roof is punctured on both the north and south slopes by three gable dormers. The symmetry of design recalls the British classical tradition. Openings on all the elevations are arranged symmetrically with two entrances on the north and one on the west side. The windows are multi-pane double hung units with shutters on the ground floor windows.

The roof is covered with cedar shingles. The cedar shingles contribute to the heritage character of the building. This material should therefore be preserved.

The building features rubble masonry with the use of a massive central bearing wall of masonry in the basement. All the windows have plain stone lintels and sills, and the corners of the building are accentuated by quoins. The masonry work is an important character-defining element and warrants careful maintenance, with the use of appropriate expertise for any repair and repointing.

The interior space is essentially open and suited to bulk storage except on the first floor which formed the principal retail area. The interior is oak with pit-sawn spruce board floors. The original layout and finishes should be retained in any future interior refurbishings. Any element that shows signs of deterioration should be repaired rather than replaced.

The Furloft/Saleshop is located inside the walls in the southeast corner of the fort, and the Warehouse located directly across the grounds, at the northeast corner, echo one another in size, materials, design, and function. The historical relationship of the building to its site and adjacent buildings should be maintained.

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89-04

Selkirk, Manitoba
Men's House
Lower Fort Garry

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Men's House at Lower Fort Garry was constructed in 1850-54, with an annex built by 1858. Initially it was a group residence for unmarried male servants of the Hudson's Bay Company. The Men's House also served as a women's ward for the provincial lunatic asylum from 1885-86, followed by use as a stable, storage, ice-house and garage. Currently it is used for interpretive purposes. It is thought to have possibly been constructed by Belonie Gilbeault. The structure was restored in the early 1970s. Parks Canada is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 89-04.

Reasons for Designation

The Men's House was designated Recognized because of its architectural significance, its environmental importance, and its historical associations.

Lower Fort Garry was established in 1830 as an administrative center for the Northern Department of the fur trade, after the amalgamation of the Hudson Bay Company and the North West Company in 1821. The buildings at the fort represent a range of fur trade building traditions and construction techniques.

The Men's House is of domestic scale and simple in design, reflecting a modest utilitarian construction tradition. The colombage pierroté wall construction is original, while renovations in the 1970s replaced the foundation, main flooring, windows and doors.

The relationship of the Men's House to the adjacent buildings is relatively unchanged. The Men's House has a visual similarity to the annex of the Big House and is familiar as one of the interpreted areas of the fort.

The construction of the Men's House relates to the peak period of occupation of the fort and the need for more housing. It is associated with the continued development of the fort as a trans-shipment depot and agricultural supply center for the fur trade.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Men's House resides in the building's form, its overall

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Selkirk, Manitoba
Men's House (Continued)

proportions, construction materials, architectural details, surviving interior layout, and the relationship to the site and setting.

The building is a simple one-and-a-half storey structure with a "T" shaped plan. The hipped roof with gabled dormers has a central chimney. The simple massing, the roof profile and the footprint reflect the utilitarian style. The modest design has functionally-located doors and windows in an uneven five bay rhythm on the main facade. This informal order typifies the local building tradition and should be retained.

The stucco walls on a stone foundation reflect one of three traditional building techniques used within the fort. Colomage pierroté consists of timber framing, rubble infill, and stucco finish. The building was renovated in the early 1970s with a new foundation, main floor, and wood shingled roof. The structural system should be respected in any intervention, and the exterior materials merit conservation expertise and regular maintenance.

The small size of the windows and simple design of the doors are typical of the utilitarian style. The wood multi-paned sash windows and plank doors are recent but follow the original configurations and should be maintained.

The structure has retained the early back-to-back double "L" planning of the early dwelling. Restoration to the 1850s period enhanced the two-part division of space and this should be maintained. The largely original second floor and surviving early interior finishes should be preserved and maintained.

The simple landscape treatment is in keeping with the simple character of the fort landscape generally, and should be maintained without embellishment.

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