



# FORT YORK

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE OF CANADA

## *Commemorative Integrity Statement*



Parks Canada  
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Canada

# FORT YORK

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE OF CANADA

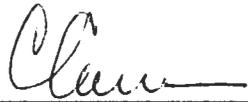
## *Commemorative Integrity Statement*

March, 2004

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**National Historic Site of Canada**

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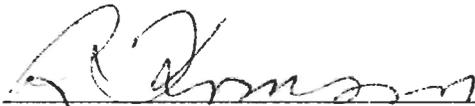
Approved:



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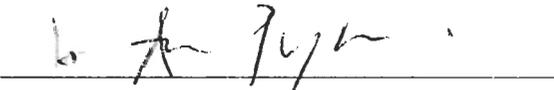
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>.1</b>
1.1 Overview	.1
1.2 National Historic Site Program Objectives	.1
1.3 Commemorative Integrity	.1
1.3.1 Definition of Commemorative Integrity	.1
1.3.2 Definition and Purpose of the Commemorative Integrity Statement	.1
1.3.3 Uses of the Commemorative Integrity Statement	.2
1.4 Cultural Resource Management Policy	.2
<b>2.0 DESIGNATION AND CONTEXT</b>	<b>.3</b>
2.1 Designation	.3
2.2 Commemorative Intent	.3
2.2.1 Definition	.3
2.2.2 Statement of Commemorative Intent for Fort York National Historic Site of Canada	.4
2.3 Designated Place	.4
2.3.1 Definition	.4
2.3.2 Description of Designated Place	.4
2.4 Historic and Geographic Context	.5
2.4.1 Historic Context	.5
2.4.2 Geographic Context	.6
<b>3.0 RESOURCES DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE REASONS FOR DESIGNATION AS A NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE</b>	<b>.7</b>
3.1 Designated Place	.7
3.1.1 Description	.7
3.1.2 Historic Values	.7
3.2 Landscape and Landscape Features	.7
3.2.1 Description	.7
3.2.2 Historic Values	.8
3.3 Buildings	.8
3.3.1 Description	.8
3.3.2 Historic Values	.9
3.4 Archaeological Sites	.9
3.4.1 Description	.9
3.4.2 Historic values	.9
3.5 Moveable Objects	.9
3.5.1 Description	.9
3.5.2 Historic values	.10
3.6 Objectives for Cultural Resources	.10

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<b>4.0 EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION OF THE REASONS FOR DESIGNATION AS A NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE</b> .....	<b>.10</b>
4.1 Reasons for Designation as a National Historic Site .....	10
4.1.1 Definition .....	10
4.1.2 Reasons for Designation .....	10
4.2 Context Messages .....	11
4.2.1 Definition .....	11
4.2.2 Context Messages .....	11
4.3 Objectives for Effective Communication .....	12
<b>5.0 VALUES AND MESSAGES NOT RELATED TO THE REASONS FOR DESIGNATION AS A NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE</b> .....	<b>.12</b>
5.1 Resources Not Related to the Reasons for Designation as a National Historic Site .....	12
5.2 Values Not Related to the reasons for Designation as a National Historic Site .....	15
5.3 Objectives for Resources and Values Not Related to the Reasons for Designation ..	15
5.4 Messages Not Related to Designation as a National Historic Site .....	15
5.5 Objectives for Messages Not Related to the Reasons for Designation .....	16
<b>6.0 APPENDICES</b> .....	<b>.16</b>
6.1 Minutes of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada regarding Fort York .....	16
6.2 Map of Fort York Designated Place and Landscape Features .....	19
6.3 List of participants at the Commemorative Integrity workshop .....	20

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Overview

Fort York National Historic Site of Canada consists of two locations, the fort located at 100 Garrison Road, and Victoria Memorial Square located at the corner of Wellington, Portland and Niagara Streets both in Toronto, Ontario. The site, which consists of the 1813-15 fort and adjacent related lands, was designated in 1923 for its role in the defence of early York (Toronto) and the survival of an important collection of early military buildings, earthworks and military cemetery. The site of the fort is owned by the City of Toronto and operated as a historic site, interpretive museum and memorial. Victoria Memorial Square is owned by the Government of Canada and leased to the City of Toronto, to be maintained as a public park.

### 1.2 National Historic Site Program Objectives

Under the national historic sites program, Parks Canada has the responsibility:

- to foster knowledge and appreciation of Canada's past through a national program of historical commemoration;
- to ensure the commemorative integrity of national historic sites by protecting and presenting them for the benefit, education and enjoyment of this and future generations in a manner that respects the significant and irreplaceable legacy represented by these places and their associated resources; and
- to encourage and support owners of national historic sites in their efforts to ensure commemorative integrity.

### 1.3 Commemorative Integrity

#### 1.3.1 Definition of Commemorative Integrity

**Commemorative Integrity** describes the health and wholeness of a national historic

site. A national historic site possesses commemorative integrity when:

- the resources directly related to the reasons for designation as a national historic site are not impaired or under threat;
- the reasons for designation as a national historic site are effectively communicated to the public; and
- the site's heritage values (including those not related to designation as a national historic site) are respected in all decisions and actions affecting the site.

Resources directly related to the reasons for the site's designation are Level 1 resources as defined in Parks Canada's *Cultural Resource Management Policy*. Resources that are not related to the reasons for designation but which have historic value are defined as Level II in the *Cultural Resource Management Policy*.

#### 1.3.2 Definition and Purpose of the Commemorative Integrity Statement

A Commemorative Integrity Statement is a document that identifies what is meant by commemorative integrity at a particular national historic site. It provides a baseline for planning, managing, reporting and taking remedial action. The document is divided into six parts:

##### 1. Introduction

##### 2. Designation and Context

##### 3. Resources Directly Related to the Reasons for Designation as a National Historic Site -

This section of the CIS identifies the resources that relate directly to the reasons for the site's designation. It also describes the historic values of these resources, which can be physical as well as associative or symbolic. These values must be safeguarded and communicated. The CIS provides guidance, through objectives, about the meaning of "not being impaired or under threat" in the context of the site.

4. *Effective communication of the reasons for designation as a National Historic Site* - This section of the CIS identifies the reasons for designation as a National Historic Site, as well as any additional essential information required to ensure their understanding. It provides guidance, through objectives, on integrity in presentation and effective communication with audiences.
5. *Resources, Values and Messages not related to the reasons for designation as a National Historic Site* - This section of the CIS covers resources messages and values that are not related to national historic significance. Objectives provide guidance on the management of these.
6. *Appendices*

### 1.3.3. Uses of the Commemorative Integrity Statement

A Commemorative Integrity Statement guides site management by:

- identifying what is most important about a site relative to the national historic designation and, for Parks Canada sites, ensuring that matters relating to national significance, including resources and messaging, are the highest management priority;
- ensuring that there is a focus on the "whole", and not just the individual resources;
- providing the fundamental document to guide management planning and preparation of a conservation and presentation plan (for the National Historic Sites of Canada Cost-Sharing Program), which detail specific actions to be carried out;
- enunciating a set of heritage values and objectives which can be used in analyzing and evaluating the impact of development and adaptive re-use proposals on a site or nearby property;
- providing the basis for design guidelines for development which may take place within or nearby and which may have an impact on the national historic site;
- giving direction on heritage messages for marketing plans and programs; and
- providing the foundation for reporting to Canadians on the state of national historic sites.

### 1.4 Cultural Resource Management Policy

Cultural resource management is an integrated and holistic approach to the management of cultural resources. It applies to all activities that affect cultural resources, including the care taken of these resources and the promotion of public understanding and enjoyment of them. The objective is to manage cultural resources in accordance with the principles of value, public benefit, understanding, respect and integrity.

Parks Canada's *Cultural Resource Management Policy* defines cultural resources as places or human works that have been determined to have historic value. Cultural resources include those directly related to the reasons for the site's national significance and those not related but which possess historic value. The Policy is the basis for management of cultural resources by Parks Canada. Other owners of national historic sites are encouraged to apply the principles and practice from the *Cultural Resource Management Policy*.

Effective cultural resource management practice is based on:

1. an up-to-date inventory of resources;
2. an evaluation of resources to determine which are to be considered as cultural resources and what it is that constitutes their historic value;
3. consideration of historic value in actions affecting conservation and presentation.

Most, if not all, operational activities have an impact on conservation or presentation;

4. monitoring and review to ensure that conservation and presentation objectives continue to be met effectively.

A Commemorative Integrity Statement sets out the results of the first two points above in order to facilitate the third and fourth.

The objectives in a Commemorative Integrity Statement specify that the site should be managed in accordance with the principles and practice of the *Cultural Resource Management Policy*. In addition to the principles and practice noted above, management under the *Cultural Resource Management Policy* means:

- cultural resources and their values are inventoried and evaluated, and these records are kept up to date;
- there are no uses or threats that reduce the potential for long-term conservation and future understanding and appreciation of the cultural resources;
- any modification to the site or its cultural resources is based on sound knowledge and respect for the historic values of the resources and is preceded by adequate research, recording, and investigation;
- conservation measures are based on direct, rather than indirect evidence, follow the path of least intrusive action, and are clearly recorded;
- any new work at or adjacent to the site is sensitive in form and scale to the site and its associated resources;
- monitoring and review systems are in place to ensure the continued survival of the cultural resources with minimum deterioration;
- reproductions and reconstructions are marked in such a way as not to be confused

with the originals they are intended to represent;

- the historic value of the resources is fully considered and integrated into the planning, conservation, presentation and operational programs.

## 2.0 DESIGNATION AND CONTEXT

### 2.1 Designation

Designation refers to the establishment of a national historic site. It occurs when the minister approves a recommendation for national historic significance from the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.

Fort York was commemorated in 1923 in response to pressure from various historical interests that the fort be protected from further degradation after several unfortunate encroachments onto the site. Its national significance was reaffirmed in 1958 as a result of the threat from the construction of the Gardiner Expressway, the seven buildings dating from the War of 1812 were declared to be of national historic and architectural significance in 1987, and the plaque text was approved in 1990. In 2003, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada approved the Statement of Commemorative Intent and description of the Designated Place.

Appendix 6.1 contains the Minutes of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada deliberations on the commemoration and the plaque inscription.

### 2.2 Commemorative Intent

#### 2.2.1 Definition

Commemorative intent refers to the reasons for a site's designation as a national historic site, as determined by the Ministerially-approved recommendations of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. A Commemorative Integrity Statement contains a *Statement of Commemorative Intent* that

provides the answer to the question -“ When and for what reason was this site designated by the Minister responsible for the *Historic Sites and Monuments Act* as a national historic site?”

**2.2.2 Statement of Commemorative Intent for Fort York National Historic Site of Canada**

Fort York was designated a national historic site in 1923. The reasons for designation, as derived from the 2003 HSMBC Minutes are:

- *Fort York constituted the primary defensive position of early York (Toronto); and*
- *The seven buildings erected between 1813 and 1815 are important surviving examples of British military architecture.*

**2.3.2 Description of Designated Place**

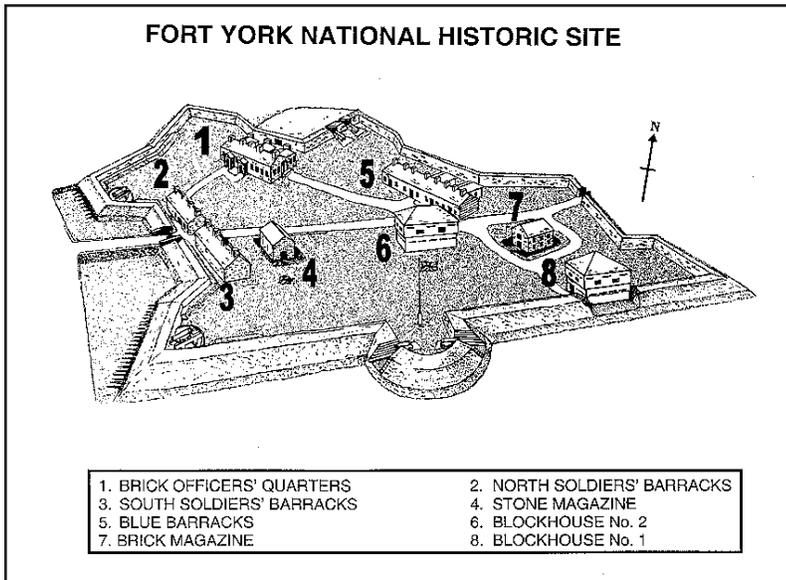
The designed place includes lands and archaeological features directly related to the fort at the time it served as the primary defensive position of early York. It is entirely on property owned by the City of Toronto and within boundaries for the site that form an expanded Fort York Heritage Conservation District under the Ontario Heritage Act. As stated in the July 2003 Minutes of the HSMBC, the designated place:

*“is in two parts: a large irregular polygon enclosing all structures and archaeological resources administered by the City of Toronto that are directly related to the reasons for national significance, and the smaller but related Victoria Square.*

*The boundaries of the first part are recommended for expansion to take in lands now owned by the City contiguous to the fort that were part of the fort’s glacis and the battlefield in 1813. On the north the limit is the railway corridor. On the south the limits are two major streets whose’ northern edge effectively traces the shoreline facing the 1812 fort. On the west they are the limits of the lands attached to Fort York when it was conveyed to the*

*City in 1909-10. The east line is the east side of the former “road to the Queen’s Wharf” that followed closely the original bank of Garrison Creek as it entered Lake Ontario”*

In addition to the fort, the lands owned by the Department of National Defence in Victoria Memorial Square, located at the intersections of Wellington, Portland and Niagara Streets are also part of the Designated Place on the basis of their historic, administrative, and operational attachment to Fort York in the 18th and 19th centuries.



**2.3 Designated Place**

**2.3.1 Definition**

Designated place refers to the place designated by the Minister of Canadian Heritage on the recommendation of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. Information on what constitutes the designated place for a particular national historic site is drawn from the minutes of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.

Appendix 6.2 is a map which shows the boundaries of the designated place, the footprint of the fort and its buildings and the existing landscape features.

## 2.4 Historic and Geographic Context

### 2.4.1 Historic Context

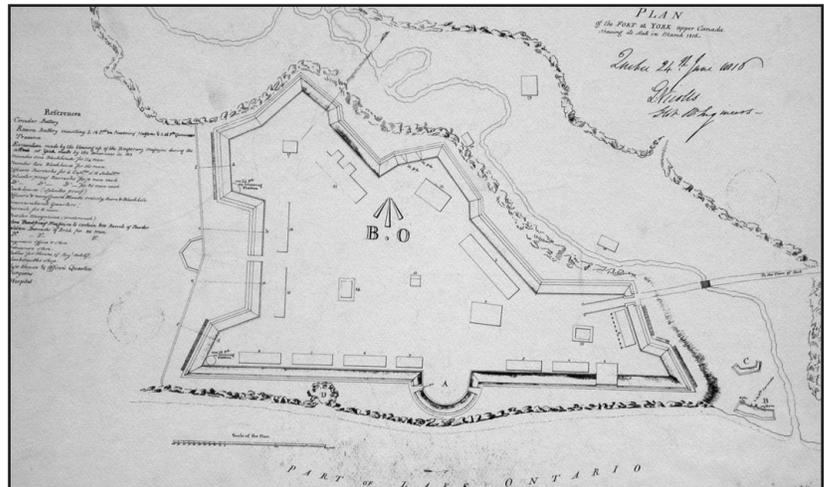
The founding of urban Toronto occurred in 1793 when John Graves Simcoe, lieutenant-governor of the backwoods colony of Upper Canada, constructed a garrison on the present site of Fort York during a serious border crisis with the United States. He then attracted civilian settlers to Toronto (then named York) and designated his community as the provincial capital. In the late 1790s, the army built additional barracks and in 1800 constructed a home for the lieutenant-governor on the Simcoe site.

In anticipation of hostilities with the U.S., Major-General Isaac Brock strengthened Fort York in 1811. (Today's west wall, moat, and circular battery date from that time.) In 1812, the Americans declared war. On 27 April 1813, the U.S. Army and Navy attacked York with 2700 men on fourteen ships and schooners, armed with eighty-five cannon. The defending force of 750 British, Canadians, Mississaugas, and Ojibways had twelve cannon. The Americans stormed ashore west of the fort under the cover of their naval guns. The defenders put up a strong fight, but fell back to Fort York from the landing site in the face of overwhelming odds. The British then blew up the fort's gunpowder magazine and retreated to Kingston. Total losses in the six-hour battle were 157 British and 320 Americans. The invaders occupied York for six days and torched the governor's

home and the provincial parliament buildings. In retaliation the British captured Washington in 1814 and burned the White House and Congress.

The Americans returned to a defenceless York in July 1813 to burn barracks and other buildings that they had missed in April. Shortly afterwards, the British rebuilt Fort York, and in August 1814 it was strong enough to repel the U.S. squadron when it again tried to enter Toronto Bay.

In February 1815, word reached the isolated community that the War of 1812 had ended the previous December. It was good news: peace had returned, and the defence of Canada against American invasion had been successful.



The British continued to garrison the fort until 1870. During times of peace, Fort York's defences were allowed to deteriorate, only to be strengthened in periods of crisis, such as the Rebellion of 1837, or when war with the United States seemed imminent, such as in 1861-62. After imperial forces withdrew from Toronto, Canadian troops used the fort until the 1930s.

The City of Toronto restored Fort York between 1932 and 1934 as a historic site. Today, the defensive walls of this City-operated museum surround Canada's largest

collection of original War of 1812 buildings. The grounds and neighbouring environment encompass the birthplace of the City, remnants of the late eighteenth-century landscape, part of the 1813 battlefield, military cemeteries, and vast archaeological resources. Combined with the site's outstanding artifact collection and deep associations to decisive moments in our past, these treasures make Fort York a site of national significance in the turbulent history of the Great Lakes region.

#### Victoria Memorial Square

The military burial ground that forms part of Victoria Memorial Square was opened in 1794 for the internment of soldiers, their wives and children. It was in use until 1863 as a place of internment for 500 soldiers when it was deemed to be full and the Strachan Avenue burying ground was opened. Beginning in 1884 steps were taken to preserve the cemetery and landscape it for use as a public park. A monument was erected in 1902 to commemorate the military burials and the name was changed to Victoria Memorial Square in 1905. The site is owned by the Government of Canada and leased to the City of Toronto for use as a public park.

#### 2.4.2 Geographic Context

Fort York was strategically located to guard the entrance to Toronto Bay and to protect the most vulnerable landward approach to the harbour and the town of York. It was a naturally defensible location because it was situated on a promontory of land surrounded by water on two sides thus affording a commanding view of the lake and the surrounding lands. The fort was built on this site to replace an earlier fort (c.1797-1800) on the east side of Garrison Creek that was destroyed by the American army during their occupation of York in 1813, which itself had replaced the 1793 fort on the original (and current) site. At the time the property included a large tract of ordnance lands

extending to the west, north and east. In 1909 the city acquired a small portion of these lands consisting of the fort and adjacent Garrison Common in order to preserve the fort as a historic site.

As the military role of the fort diminished during the middle decades of the 19th century, railways, roads and industries gradually encroached upon and obscured its original prominent location. The filling in of the harbour between the 1850s and 1920s removed the fort from the shoreline so that it is now 900 metres from the site. The construction of the Gardiner Expressway immediately south of the site in the 1950s further isolated it from its surroundings. Despite these developments, the fort still retains much of its original land base and still has a significant presence in this part of the city.

Today the site consists of a 16.6 ha. site essentially surrounded by roads and the railway corridor. A subsidiary .81 ha. site known as Victoria Memorial Square is separated from the site by the railway corridor and Bathurst Street. The site is located in a residential area and its use as a public park is thus appropriate.

### 3.0 RESOURCES DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE REASONS FOR DESIGNATION AS A NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

#### 3.1 The Designated Place

##### 3.1.1 Description

The designated place consists of the following lands



1. a 16.6 ha. parcel of land consisting of :
  - a complex of eight buildings within a 3.24 ha area enclosed by a bastioned stone-lined earthwork;
  - the open ‘mustering ground’ to the west [Garrison Common];
  - land between the north ramparts and the railway corridor and land between the south rampart and Fort York Boulevard and Fleet Street; and
  - a military cemetery at Strachan Avenue and other lands cut off from the main area by elevated roads.
2. a .81 ha. parcel known as Victoria Memorial Square

##### 3.1.2 Historic values

The historic values of the designated place are that:

- The fort was part of the British defence of colonial Canada;
- The fort was strategically located to protect the harbour and the town of York;

- The fort is the site of an important battle during the War of 1812 which resulted in the occupation of York;
- Much of the original footprint of the fort has survived;
- It is associated with the founding, defence and early development of Toronto; and
- The Military Burying Ground (Victoria Memorial Square) was the place of interment for the Fort York garrison from 1793 to 1863.

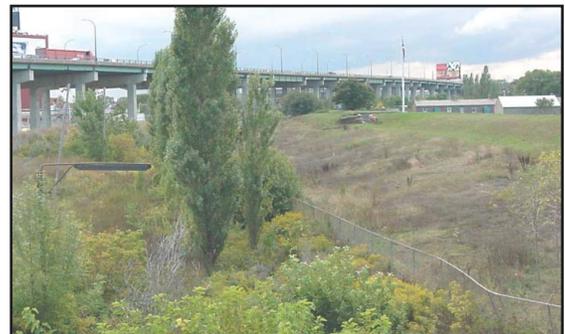
#### 3.2 Landscape and Landscape Features

##### 3.2.1 Description:

The cultural landscape features which are directly associated with the 1816 fort consist of both natural and built features visible on the landscape. While there has been significant change to the site since the 1850s, certain landscape features and views have survived which speak to its military function.

The level 1 landscape features consist of the following elements:

- those portions of the ravine bank on the north and east sides which have not been modified;
- the open character of the Garrison Common;
- the western earth work, moat and those portions of other earthworks which align



with the original trace and that contain significant amounts of original fabric;

- the historic access route to the western entrance to the fort (Garrison Road); and
- the remaining headstones placed around the base of the monument in the middle of Victoria Memorial Square.

### 3.2.2 Historic Values

The cultural landscape of Fort York is valued for the:

- Surviving natural landscape features which speak to the prominent location of the fort at the edge of a ravine and the lake;
- Surviving military features such as the western earthwork and moat which illustrates the scale and form of the original fortifications;
- Open ground of the Garrison Common which reinforces the military character of the site and is a remnant of the much larger ordinance lands;
- Tangible remains of the defensible position and associated landscape as it existed in at the time the fort was constructed;
- The spatial arrangement of the buildings: the two blockhouses are located in a manner to maximize their military function as defensive structures, while the residential buildings were placed around the perimeter to free up the middle for military activities;
- Survival of Garrison Road as the access route to the site from the west, and the original entrance to the fort from the east;

- Views towards the fort from along Garrison Road , from the east (Bathurst Street), and north from the foot of the south ramparts which conveys the military character of the site; and
- Views towards the north and east from inside the fort which convey a sense of the original elevation of the fort in relation to its surroundings.

The cultural landscape of Victoria Memorial Square is valued for:

- The survival of a number of original headstones located in conjunction with the monument.

### 3.3 Built Heritage

#### 3.3.1 Description

Within the ramparts today stand seven buildings that date from the rebuilding of the fort in 1813-15: Blockhouses Nos. 1 and 2, a



brick powder magazine (second floor added, 1824), a stone powder magazine (1815), two brick soldiers' barracks (1815, with a modern reconstruction of one room), and officers' barracks and mess (1815, enlarged 1826). An eighth structure, a junior officers' barracks, was rebuilt in 1934 and 2000 incorporating some original fabric. These seven buildings

are level 1 cultural resources because of their direct association with the reasons for designation and since they are the only extant buildings from the British period of occupation. "These structures represent perhaps the largest extant group of buildings constructed by the British army during the War of 1812 period. They exhibit a variety of aspects of early 19th century military architecture - the massive squared timber of the blockhouse, the formal design of the Officers' Quarter, the vault of the powder magazine, the utility of the brick barracks combine to form a rich contrasting resource. The buildings show an excellent use of local materials and workmanship combined with a knowledge of style and proportion." (The Buildings at Fort York", HSMBC Agenda Paper 1987-19, June 1987).

### 3.3.2 Historic Values

The historic values of the buildings are:

- Their direct association with the military operation and maintenance of the site during the British occupation period;
- That they are rare surviving examples, each exhibiting a particular aspect of early 19th century British military architecture and construction techniques;
- The buildings represent British military architecture in their plan, elevations, door and window openings, construction materials, roof types, interior arrangement of spaces and interior finishes (where original); and
- Evidence of a high degree of craftsmanship in the construction of the seven buildings.

## 3.4 Archaeological Sites

### 3.4.1 Description

The archaeological sites at the fort consist of:

- the sub-surface remains of pre War of 1812 buildings such as the first military post

built in 1793 and the Lieutenant-Governor's House;

- ten buildings from the 1813-1815 period, and buildings from the 1837 rebellion period and latter;
- the remains of two batteries believed to be located underneath Bathurst Street;
- the crater created by the explosion of the powder magazine and the glacis buried underneath fill outside the south rampart; and
- the original earthworks and the footprint of those removed during the 1930s restoration.

Archaeological investigations have revealed that the remains of most of the above buildings are well preserved. Sites of material culture are well documented and are extensive, rich and well preserved. There are also areas of high archaeological potential consisting of outbuildings outside the fort and underneath the rail lines for which less information is available.

### 3.4.2 Historic values

The historic value of the archaeological sites is their:

- contribution to an understanding of the fort regarding its construction, operation, evolution and social life.

## 3.5. Moveable Objects

### 3.5.1 Description

The objects in the collection at Fort York directly related to the reasons for commemoration consist of the two Simcoe cannons, a uniform belonging to Colonel William Jarvis of the Queens Rangers, two portraits, officers' packing trunks, a pianoforte, a plan of Fort York and three watercolours. In addition there is a vast collection of archaeological artifacts recovered from the site.

### 3.5.2 Historic values

The moveable objects are valued for:

- their direct association with the fort during the commemorative period;
- their direct association with the purpose and occupation of the site;
- the information they provide on the occupation of the site;
- their contribution to an understanding of the site;
- their association with individuals who served at the site; and
- their association with the formative years of Toronto.

### 3.6 Objectives for Cultural Resources

The resources (designated place, landscape and landscape features, buildings and moveable objects) will not be impaired or under threat when:

- the resources and their associated values are respected;
- management decisions are based on adequate and sound information and are made in accordance with the principles and practice of Parks Canada's *Cultural Resource Management Policy* ;
- the resources and their associated values are not lost, impaired or threatened from natural processes, for example erosion and decay, within or outside of the site;
- the resources and their associated values are not lost, impaired or threatened from human actions within or outside the site;
- the historic values of the resources are communicated to the visitors and the general public; and
- the building's ongoing function as a contemporary museum is continued.

## 4.0 EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION OF THE REASONS FOR DESIGNATION AS A NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Protection is only one part of commemorative integrity. As the *National Historic Sites Policy* states: "Protection and presentation are fundamental to commemoration, since without protection there can be no historic site to be enjoyed, and without presentation there can be no understanding of why the site is important to our history, and hence, to all Canadians."

### 4.1 Reasons for Designation as a National Historic Site

#### 4.1.1 Definition

The reasons for designation as a national historic site express, in the form of messages, why this place was designated as a national historic site.

#### 4.1.2 Reasons for Designation

There are two messages relating to why this place was designated as a national historic site:

- Fort York constituted the primary defensive position of early York (Toronto); and
- The seven buildings erected between 1813 and 1815 are important surviving examples of British military architecture.



## 4.2 Context Messages

### 4.2.1 Definition

Context messages are those messages that are essential to understanding the reason for the national significance of the site.

### 4.2.2 Context Messages

For "Fort York constituted the primary defensive position of early York (Toronto)" the context messages are:

- The site was chosen for the establishment of a fort because it was strategically located at the entrance to Toronto harbour on a high promontory with a view of the harbour and the approaches to the city from the west;
- Fort York replaced an earlier fort (c.1797-1800) on the east side of Garrison Creek, which was burned during the American occupation of York in 1813;
- The current fort was built on the site of the original fortification established by Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe in 1793;
- Fort York was the cornerstone of a defense system surrounding York;
- The fort was the site of a battle during the War of 1812, which resulted in the occupation of York;
- Fort York played a key role in the founding and settlement of York;
- Fort York was a part of the British military strategy to defend Upper Canada; and
- The Military Burying Ground in Victoria Memorial Square was the place of interment for the fallen soldiers during the early years of York.

For "The seven buildings erected between 1813 and 1815 are important surviving

examples of British military architecture", the context messages are:

- The seven buildings were constructed after the occupation of York in order to re-establish the defences of the town;
- These buildings illustrate the design principles and range of British military architecture and are now very rare surviving examples of these building types;
- The buildings demonstrate an excellent use of local materials combined with a knowledge of style, proportion and were built with a high degree of workmanship;
- The blockhouses were strategically positioned to afford the optimum view of their surroundings;
- The remaining seven buildings are all that remain of a larger assemblage of buildings both inside and outside the ramparts; and
- The site has a large collection of archaeological sites, artifacts and objects which contribute to an understanding and appreciation of the site messages.



### *National Significance*

The designation of Fort York as a national historic site is explained by the following standard context message:

- Fort York is a national historic site, a place designated by the Government of Canada as a site of importance to all Canadians because of its national historic significance.

#### 4.3 Objectives for Effective Communication

The reasons for the site's national historic significance are effectively communicated to the public when:

- the overall heritage presentation experience conveys the reasons for designation as a national historic site;
- visitors and site stewards understand the reasons for designation as a national historic site; and
- management decisions are based on adequate and sound information and are made in accordance with the principles and practice of the *Cultural Resource Management Policy*.

## 5.0 RESOURCES, VALUES AND MESSAGES NOT RELATED TO THE REASONS FOR DESIGNATION AS A NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

In applying the first element of commemorative integrity, emphasis is clearly on resources directly related to reasons for designation as a national historic site.

However the CRM Policy applies to all cultural resources. A CIS is developed to assist manager/owners in managing all the resources for which they have responsibility. The overall stewardship of a national historic site is called into question and commemorative integrity is threatened if resources not related to the reasons for designation are not managed in accordance with the *CRM Policy*.

### 5.1 Resources Not Related to the Reasons for Designation as a National Historic Site

#### 5.1.1 Designated Place

##### 5.1.1.1 Fort York

The site of Fort York has a long and complex history before and after the period during which it constituted the primary defence of York. The site was occupied as early as 1793 when Lieutenant- Governor John Graves established a military post on the site and continued until 1945 when military use finally ceased.

During this long history, buildings were added and demolished and the site was encroached upon and its setting was radically altered. The most profound modifications took place during the Depression era restoration of the fort. This project resulted in the removal of all post 1816 buildings and the reconstruction of the ramparts in a location and manner that did not correspond with the 1816 plan of the fort.

The heritage values associated with the site of Fort York are:

- The establishment of a military post on the site in 1793 by Lieutenant-Governor John Graves;
- The long history of military use from 1793 to 1945;
- The establishment of the Fort York Armouries in the 1930s;
- The establishment of the Strachan Avenue cemetery to replace the Military Burying ground;
- The role of the fort in the a number of important events in Canadian history: the founding of Toronto, the Mississauga Crisis, the War of 1812, the 1837 rebellion, the crisis of the 1860s;
- The restoration efforts of the 1930s;
- Its historic association with Toronto;
- Its role as a catalyst for the early preservation movement; and

- Its role as a symbol of the founding place of Toronto.

### 5.1.2 Building

The Blue Barracks is the original junior officers' quarters, partly reconstructed in several phases. In 1934, the structural elements of the extant (west) portion of the building were labeled, carefully dismantled and reassembled as part of the site-wide restoration project. The external framing elements of this portion are all original from a height of approximately 2'-0" above grade upwards. The chimneys were not dismantled and remain original from below the roof deck downwards, with the exposed portions having been rebuilt in 1934. The 2000 building is an entirely new structure which replicates externally the former eastern portion of the building (demolished in 1837), with two small, new additions at the rear. The eastern half of the Blue Barracks is not a cultural resource.

The Blue Barracks is valued for its:

- association with the restoration work of the 1930s;
- fabric and form of the original junior officer's quarters ; and
- role in defining the limits of the parade square.

### 5.1.3 Moveable Objects:

The site contains a large collection of native material, military objects, archival material, and archaeological artifacts directly associated with the occupation of the site and other representative objects used to present the history of the site. In addition, the collection contains interpretive material from the 1930s restoration, which illustrates how the site was presented at that time and a number of plaques and monuments.

The collection is valued for its:

- Direct association to the operation and occupation of the fort throughout its history;
- Information it provides on the occupation of the site;
- Contribution to an understanding of the site and its relationship to the city;
- Quantity - the large collection speaks to the scale and significance of the site;
- Quality - the collection of medals, uniforms and insignia is very significant in the context of Canadian military history;
- Uniqueness - the collection of interpretive material from the 1930s is rare and illustrates how the site was presented at the time;
- Association with individuals who served at the site; and
- Commemoration of individuals and events through the plaques and monuments.

### 5.1.4 Archaeological Sites:

The archaeological sites consist of evidence of pre-contact native occupation, and extensive archaeological remains of the post 1816 period, especially from the 1837 rebellion to the end of World War I, and the original alignment of the Garrison Road.

The archaeological sites are valued for the:

- Information on the evolution of the site and military and domestic life at the fort; and
- Information on the evolution of the landscape and the location and construction of the Garrison Road.

### 5.1.5 Landscape and Landscape Features

The site of the fort was continually modified over the a period of two hundred years as a result of encroachments, changing needs and the restoration efforts of the 1930's. The encroachments by the railway resulted in a destruction of much of the original north rampart and some of the south ramparts. The

restoration work of the 1930s reconstructed some of the ramparts around the fort in a manner that reduced the footprint of the fort. These reconstructed ramparts are therefore level 2 cultural resources as they are not original in terms of location, form, and composition. Other level 2 landscape features include the stone revetments, the west gate entrance at Fleet Street, the Grant Trunk Railroad cut, and the Strachan Avenue cemetery which is a burial ground established in the 1860s to replace the Military Burial Ground at Victoria Memorial Square. A memorial with remaining headstones was erected on the site in the 1960s.



The landscape features are valued for the:

- Reconstructed ramparts which are the most striking examples of the modifications to the site as a result of the Depression era reconstruction project;
- Evidence of the Grand Trunk Railway cut, the construction of which started the process of filling the lake in front of the fort;
- West entrance gate which is a landmark, illustrates the encroachment onto the site



from other uses, and helps to define the public entrance to the site;

- The high quality of workmanship of the revetments; and
- The survival of a number of original headstones in the Strachan Avenue Cemetery memorial with the use of the site as a cemetery from the 1860s to 1911.

### Victoria Memorial Square

After the Military Burying ground was closed in 1863, the site languished for many years until 1884 when there was increased pressure from religious and civic leaders to improve the site. Subsequently, the ground was leveled and a park was established on the site. In 1902 a monument to the memory of the officers and men who fought in the defence of York and Canada in the War of 1812 was sculpted by Walter Allward and erected in the center of the site, and in 1905 the name was changed to Victoria Memorial Square.

The landscape features related to the commemoration of the military burial ground consist of:



- A bronze memorial to the officers and men who fought in the defence of York and Canada in the War of 1812, sculpted by Walter Allward;
- to the unknown soldier sculpted by Walter Allward;
- A plaque which identifies the regiments involved in the War of 1812;
- An iron fence in a square around the monument;
- The diagonal path system; and
- The corner stone from the Garrison church.

The cultural landscape of Victoria Memorial Square is valued for:

- The survival of the original design intent of the park as embodied in the prominent central location of the monument, the iron fence and the diagonal path system; and
- The monument to the officers and men who fought in defence of York and Canada in the War of 1812, an early work of Walter Allward the designer of the Vimy Memorial, himself a person of national historic significance.

### 5.2 Values Not Related to the Reasons for Designation as a National Historic Site

- The site is a significant landmark in the City of Toronto;
- The landscaped grounds of the fort and Victoria Memorial Square function as a civic park and major urban green space;
- It plays a major role in the educational curriculum of the regional school program; and
- The site of the fort is designated under the Ontario Heritage Act.

### 5.3 Objectives for Resources and Values Not Related to the Reasons for Designation

The resources will not be impaired or under threat when:

- the resources and their associated values are respected;
- management decisions are based on adequate and sound information and are made in accordance with the principles and practice of Parks Canada's *Cultural Resource Management Policy*;
- the resources and their associated values are not lost, impaired or threatened from natural processes, for example erosion and decay, within or outside of the site;
- the resources and their associated values are not lost, impaired or threatened from human actions within or outside the site; and
- the historic values of the resources are communicated to the visitors and the general public.

### 5.4 Messages not Related to Designation as a National Historic Site

These messages are not directly associated with the reasons for national significance:

- The site is the location of a long history of military presence from 1793 to 1945;
- The fort is related to other military installations of the period, e.g. Fort Erie, Fort George and Fort Malden;
- The site was the location of a Government House established in 1800;
- Additional buildings were constructed after the 1837 rebellion;
- The fort was transferred to the Dominion of Canada in 1870 and was used as a staging point for the Red River Expedition, World War I and had limited military use during WWII;
- From 1880 there has been a strong citizen commitment to preserve the fort despite government indifference and encroachments by industries and transportation corridors;

- The fort was transferred to the City of Toronto in 1909 in the understanding that it would be preserved;
- The fort was restored in the 1930's as Toronto's centennial project and has been operated as a historic site since then;
- The fort was threatened by the construction of the Gardiner Expressway in 1958, but was saved as a result of public support;
- The local militia has had a long association with the site and constructed the Fort York Armouries through local funds;
- The existence of the Garrison Reserve influenced the evolution and development of this part of the city; and
- The military burying ground in Victoria Memorial Square was closed in 1863 and replaced by a military cemetery on the Garrison reserve near Strachan Avenue.

#### National Context:

- The site is part of the family of national historic sites commemorating places of national historic significance.
- The site is one of 32 national historic sites in Toronto.

#### 5.5 Objectives for Messages Not Related to the Reasons for Designation

The messages not related to the reasons for designation as a national historic site are effectively communicated to the public when:

- Part of the heritage presentation experience conveys the messages not related to the reasons for designation as a national historic site;
- The messages not related to the reasons for designation as a national historic site and their presentation do not overwhelm or detract from the presentation and understanding of the site's national historic significance;

- Visitors understand the messages not related to the reasons for designation as a national historic site; and
- Management decisions are based on adequate and sound information and are made in accordance with the principles and practice of the *Cultural Resource Management Policy*.

## 6.0 APPENDICES

### Appendix 6.1: Minutes of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada:

#### Approved recommendations of the Board, 1923 to 1990

##### HSMBC Minutes, 1921

The following correspondence was not read and was left over for further discussion:

Letter of December 4th, 1920, from the Women's Canadian Historical Society, Toronto, re preservation of Fort York.

##### HSMBC Minutes, 1923

Fort York, Stanley Barracks.

Moved by Judge Howay.

Seconded by Major Edwards.

That the site of Fort York (Stanley Barracks) is of national importance, that the Secretary be instructed to continue his efforts to prevent further dilapidation.

Carried

##### HSMBC Minutes, 1926

Fort York, Toronto.

Moved by Mr. Harkin,

Seconded by Judge Howay.

That the responsibility for the enforcement of the conditions in the Fort York transfer to the City of Toronto should be left with the Department of National Defence and not taken over by this Board.

Carried.

**HSMBC Minutes, 1930**

Fort York.

Already declared of national importance by the Board at a previous meeting.

Moved by Judge Crowe.

Seconded by Mr. Harkin.

That the Secretary be instructed to notify the York Pioneer and Historical Society that the site of Fort York had already been declared of national importance by the Board and that no action can be taken respecting the remainder of the sites submitted.

Carried.

**HSMBC Minutes, 1931**

Fort York, Toronto.

Moved by Dr. Webster.

Seconded by Judge Howay.

That the Board, having learned with pleasure that the Women's Canadian Historical Society desire to undertake the erection of this memorial themselves, entirely approve of this proposal.

Carried

**Narrative Agenda for the Meeting of the HSMBC November 3rd to November 7th, 1958, HS. 9-14**

**Old Fort York**

In a letter to the Mayor of Toronto, the Minister asked that he be informed officially of the intention of the City of Toronto or of the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, in regard to the site of Old Fort York and for the use of lands forming part of the old Military Cemetery adjacent to the Fort. An endeavour will be made to inform the Board of developments in this matter.

**HSMBC Minutes, Fall 1958: H.S.9-14****Old Fort York**

The Board was informed that the Minister in a letter to the Mayor of Toronto had asked that he be informed officially of the intention of the City of Toronto or of the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto with regard to the site of Old Fort York and for the use of the lands forming part of the old Military Cemetery adjacent to the Fort.

The Secretary read the text of the covenant which was incorporated in the agreement entered into by the City of Toronto, May 17, 1909, under which a property, including Fort York, was conveyed to that City.

Moved by Chief Justice Campbell.

Seconded by Dr. Sage.

That this subject be deferred for attention at the next meeting of the Board.

Carried

**National Historic Sites Division Note:**

The opinion of the Board that the existing Fort York at Toronto is of national historic importance together with the Board recommendation that it be so declared was submitted to the Department in a memorandum of December 5, 1958

**HSMBC Minutes, June 1987**

The Buildings at Fort York, Ontario

The Board recommended that

“the seven buildings at Fort York, dating from the second half of the War of 1812, are of national historic and architectural significance; however given the Program's on-going commitment to the preservation, restoration and interpretation of a number of equally significant 19th Century military sites, involvement should be limited to commemoration by means of a plaque”.

The Board also recommended that

“the text of the plaque commemorating the buildings at Fort York make some reference to Fort York’s place in the Canadian heritage preservation movement”.

Approved Plaque Text, November 1990:

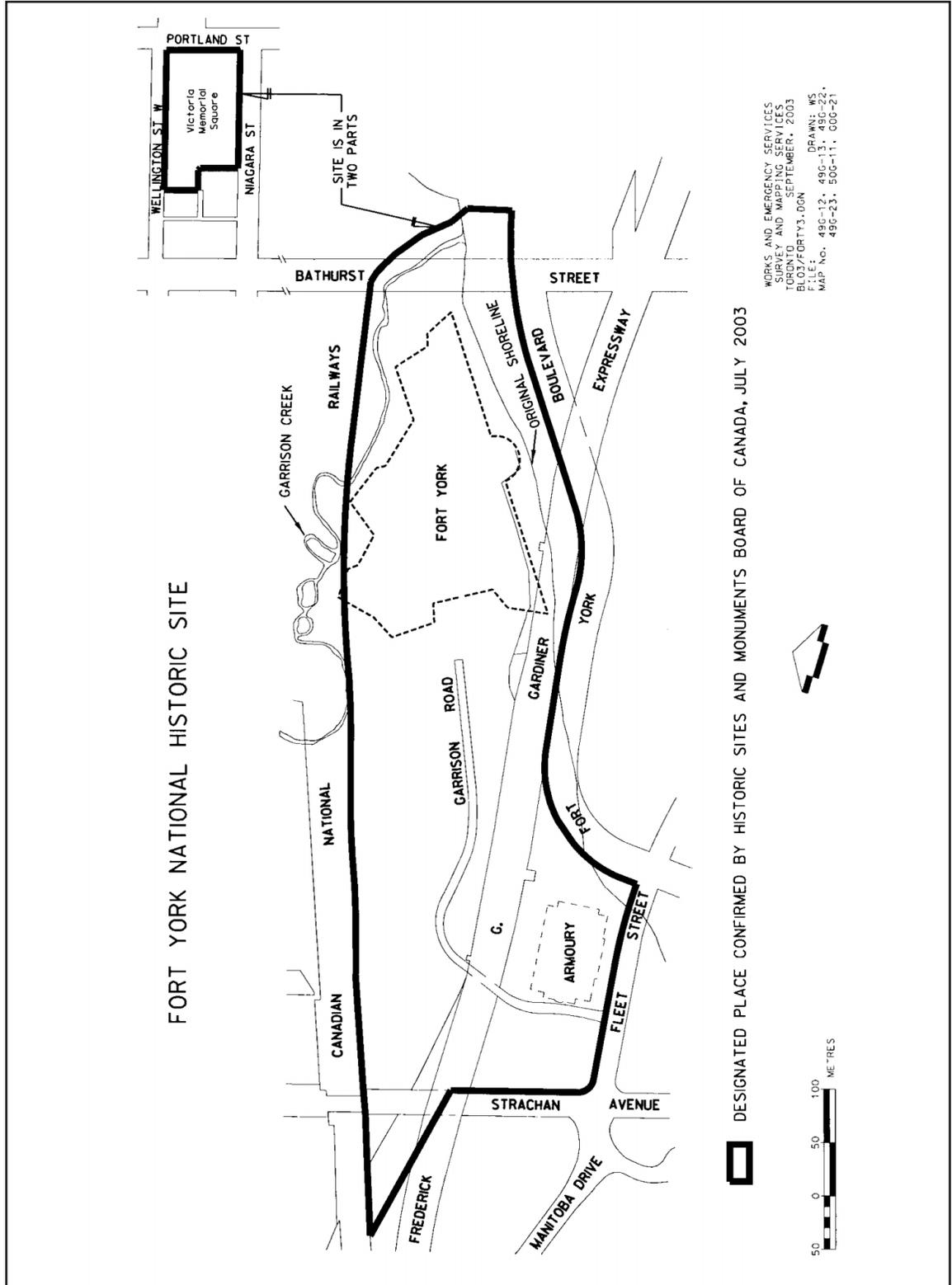
**FORT YORK - LE FORT YORK**

Fort York constituted the primary defensive position in early York (Toronto). The present buildings, erected between 1813 and 1815 to replace those destroyed during the American occupations of York in 1813, are among the oldest in Toronto and are important surviving examples of British military architecture. At the turn of the 20th century, the fort was threatened with demolition. The fight to save it led to one of the first victories of the Canadian heritage movement. The fort was bought by the city in 1909 and restored between 1932 and 1934 as part of Toronto’s centennial celebration.

Le fort York constituait le principal ouvrage défensif de la ville de York ( Toronto) à ses débuts. Les bâtiments actuels, construits entre 1813 et 1815 pour remplacer ceux détruits lors des occupations américaines de 1813, comptent parmi les plus vieux à Toronto et offrent des exemples importants de l’architecture militaire anglaise. En 1909, le mouvement canadien pour la conservation du patrimoine connut l’une de ses premières victoires lorsque le fort, menacé de démolition au début du siècle, fut acheté par la ville. Il fut restauré entre 1932 et 1934 dans le cadre des fêtes du centenaire de Toronto.

(612 frappes) Approved by the full Board, 16 November 1990

Appendix 6.2 Fort York Designated Place



**Appendix 6.3: List of participants at the CIS workshop**

The CIS workshop was held at Fort York on May 22nd and May 23rd, 2002. A follow up workshop was held on October 29th and 30th to define the Designated Place. The following participated in the May CIS workshop.

Jo Ann Pynn, Museum Administrator,  
Fort York

David Spittal, Archaeologist,  
Fort York

**Parks Canada staff:**

Dennis Carter-Edwards, Research Historian,  
Parks Canada

Joe Last, Senior Archaeologist, Military Sites,  
Parks Canada

Manuel Stevens, Heritage Planner,  
Parks Canada

Ron Dale, Superintendent,  
Niagara National Historic Sites

Sarah Gauthier, Planning Intern,  
Parks Canada

**Friends of Fort York:**

Robert Allsopp, Friends of Fort York

Joe Gill, Chair, Friends of Fort York

Nicholas Holman, Friends of Fort York

Catherine Nasmith, Friends of Fort York

Stephen Otto, Friends of Fort York

George Waters, Friends of Fort York

George Beal, Chair  
Fort York Management Board

Marilyn Roy, Bathurst Quay  
Neighbourhood Association

**City of Toronto staff:**

Gary Baldey, Supervisor, Cultural Assets

Carl Benn, Chief Curator, City of Toronto

Rob Berry, Tourism Development Officer,  
City of Toronto

Karen Black, Manager, Museums and  
Heritage Services, Culture Division