

# DES BRAVES PARK

## FACT SHEET

### History of the Site



In 1633 the French term *banlieue* (which now means “suburb” in English) referred to a distance of one *lieue* (league), or about 5 km, from Québec’s city limits. In 1639 trading post clerk Pierre Delaporte owned an approximately 40 acres property there where he built a small building. Seven years later, merchant Henry Pinguet

purchased part of this land—a plot about 3 acres wide by 20 acres long—extending from Grande-Allée to about 5½ acres from the St. Charles River. In 1705 tanner Jacques Jahan acquired part of the land north of the current Chemin Sainte-Foy and built a new house there, as well as a tannery and a windmill.

Jean-Baptiste Dumont, a trader from Québec, became the owner of the site in 1741. In 1747 he signed a contract to have a 12 foot (3.9 m) diameter stone bark mill built to replace the wooden mill. The same mill occupied a strategic location in the Battle of Sainte-Foy on April 28, 1760, during which it sustained heavy damage. In 1781 the property was purchased by the Honourable Henry Caldwell, member of the Legislative Council, who had the mill torn down.



## Architectural Vestiges

### Pinguet House



Two types of foundations were discovered at the site. The different construction techniques (masonry and dry masonry) point to two distinct uses for the site. The three foundation walls (south, east, and west) of a small house, which have buckled slightly under outside pressure, indicate a square building measuring 3.6 m per side. With less than 10 m<sup>2</sup> of inside space, the building was just large enough to serve as hearth and home for a settler tending

his land. It most likely belonged to trade post clerk Pierre Delaporte.

A partially uncovered masonry foundation wall made of large stone blocks indicates that a new house was built on top of the foundation of the first house. It appears to be an 8 x 5.2 m rectangle. With the construction of a second brick structure in the northeast corner of the extension and the addition of piping, the house built for Henry Pinguet's family was likely a home with two heated rooms and a room supplied with water. The numerous charred wooden remains uncovered at the location of two main sections of the building suggest that it was destroyed by fire.

### The Dumont Mill



There appears to be a convincing correlation between the round-shaped masonry vestiges unearthed east of the Des Braves Park terrace and the terms of the contracts Jean-Baptiste Dumont had drawn up in 1747 for the construction of a wind-powered bark mill. It is not surprising that the 4.7 m diameter found at the base of the demolition remains is larger than the 3.9 m diameter remains mentioned in the masonry contract because stone towers like

the one in this mill were tapered and needed slightly larger foundations. The only stone blocks left standing indicate the wall was 0.94 m (3 French feet) thick, leaving an interior diameter of 2.76 m, which was undoubtedly sufficient for a bark mill. The lack of visible remains on the west side over a distance of 1.96 m (6 French feet) could correspond to the opening where the mill entrance once was.

## Artifacts



The archaeological excavations carried out at the site of the Pinguet House and the Dumont Mill in 1993, 2010 and 2011 turned up an outstanding collection of lost or abandoned objects from the 17th century that speak volumes about the way

of life and living conditions of some of the first inhabitants of the environs of Québec.

Many objects of interest were uncovered, including a coin of the Chambre des comptes of Brittany struck in 1647, a fire starter, and a tomahawk. The household remains found at the site of the Pinguet House—peas; bones of fish, birds, and mammals; and a variety of earthenware containers for cooking or storing food—confirm that this was indeed a residence.

Although the daily life of settlers was ruled by subsistence activities, there was nonetheless also time leisure pursuits as well as for spiritual activities, as evidenced by the medal rosary beads, and small crucifix found at the site.



# BLOCKHOUSE

## FACT SHEET

### History of the Site



In the 18th century, the threat of an American invasion was very real for the people of Québec. After an aborted attempt in 1775, British military authorities decided to fortify Cape Diamond. As part of the fortifications process, a temporary citadel was built from 1779 to 1783. An advanced blockhouse was built to complete the enclosure in 1782.

Blockhouses, which were popular in Europe, sprang up across the St. Lawrence Valley after the British army took Québec in 1759. Easy, quick, and cheap to build and maintain, the blockhouse was an effective and versatile military structure that had proven its worth.

The advanced blockhouse of the temporary citadel was built by British soldiers with the help of local labourers using local materials. The two-story building was built on a masonry foundation and the second floor projected out slightly above. The log-construction wooden walls were interspersed with firing ports and embrasures to allow its occupants to see and fire on the enemy. The blockhouse is made up of two central buildings of different sizes.

The advanced blockhouse's location on Cape Diamond gave the small detachments occupying it an unobstructed view of the St. Lawrence River. However, since the structure was made primarily of wood, it was not as sturdy as some. It was not built to withstand artillery fire, and there was always a risk of fire. And it would appear that fire is what likely caused the building to be destroyed and ultimately abandoned in the mid-1810s.



## Architectural Vestiges



The archaeological digs carried out from 2006 to 2009 revealed the vestiges of the advanced blockhouse of the temporary citadel. Archaeologists uncovered a large portion of the masonry foundations and remains of stone (piping), brick (well, stove, and fireplace), and wooden elements of this defensive structure.

The small central building, which has been fully excavated, occupied a space 6.5 m long by 4.3 m wide. Only 23% of the large central building has been excavated, because much of it is located beneath Avenue Cap-aux-Diamants. The building was a 10.5 x 10.5 m square structure. The many uniform buttons found at the blockhouse site suggest that a number of regiments occupied the building one by one for brief periods, especially during the War of 1812.

The discovery of a large number of architectural vestiges and traces of human occupation damaged by fire or intense heat inside the advanced blockhouse seems to indicate the building was partially destroyed by a fire between 1812 and 1814. Other clues suggest that it was abandoned and never again occupied after the fire.

## Artifacts



The artifacts found, e.g., pots, porcelain and fine earthenware crockery, wine glasses, utensils, and more, paint a picture of the daily activities of the blockhouse's occupants, which included preserving, preparing, and serving food.

Surprisingly, only a few pieces of weaponry have been found at the blockhouse site, including a triangular blade bayonet, a cannonball, and musket balls.

However, a number of military uniform components have been found, including a shako plate and ornaments, chin strap tassels, a military belt buckle and many buttons.

