

THE LACAC OF BROCKVILLE - 166-79

1 MAY 1979

Designation Report

Designation Recommendation
and Description for

General Isaac

Brock Monument

Court House Green,
Brockville, Ontario

A. REASONS FOR DESIGNATION
UNDER THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT, 1974

The Brock Monument is recommended for designation for historical and architectural reasons. The monument is surmounted by a bust of General Sir Isaac Brock, a distinguished soldier who played a leading part in the defence of Upper Canada in the War of 1812. The City of Brockville is named for him. The monument is an attractive one in a prominent central location in the City.

B. Historical Background:

Major-General Isaac Brock was Administrator of Upper Canada and commander of the armed forces in the province at the outbreak of war with the United States in June, 1812.

Brock was born in Guernsey, Channel Islands in 1760 and had spent his life in the British Army. He was commissioned at 15 in the 8th Regiment of Foot. At 28 he was in command of the 49th Regiment in the Low Countries and distinguished himself at the Battle of Ecomont-op-Zee. In 1802 he brought the 49th Foot to Canada.

By 1808 Brock was impatient with service, "in this remote inactive corner without the slightest mention being made of me" while his brother officers were fighting Napoleon in Europe.

When in 1811 he received permission to return to Europe, war with the United States threatened, and he withdrew his request to transfer.

His prompt and effective action in organizing the defence of Upper Canada was an important factor in the conduct of the war. He was knighted for his leadership in capturing Detroit but had not been told of this distinction before his death at the Battle of Queenston Heights, October 13, 1812.

The Village of Brockville was named after him in 1812, providing additional assurance of future mention of his name.

In 1902 a group of women in Brockville formed the General Brock Chapter, Daughters of the Empire. One of their first projects was to raise funds for a monument in Brockville to General Brock. Over the next several years \$1400. was raised by teas, dances, sales and entertainments. The Chapter engaged Mr. Hamilton McCarthy, a leading Canadian sculptor of the time to make a bust of General Brock. The work was done in Ottawa.

The monument was unveiled in 1912, the hundredth anniversary of Brock's death. Hon. Sam Hughes, Minister of Militia performed the function on August 19th, before a distinguished gathering.

c. Architectural Description:

The monument is located at the south side of the Court House Green, facing south down Court House Avenue to the Cenotaph and the St. Lawrence River.

The bust of General Brock is a bronze casting and is larger than life size, about 3 feet high and about 32 inches across the shoulders. It shows the General bareheaded but in uniform, wearing a decoration. The rear of the bust which is unfinished is marked "Hamilton McCarthy, Sculptor, 1912".

The bust rests on a marble slab about 2 inches thick, chamfered at the lower edge. The monument below this level is of stone, apparently limestone.

Immediately below the marble is a section about 3 feet in height, square in plan, tapered towards the top and decorated near the top with a substantial carved moulding. Below this moulding the front (south) side of the monument is carved with the name "EROCK" and a large frond. At the bottom of this section is a moulding, a scotia and a band inscribed on the front

HE WHO GUARDS NEVER SLEEPETH.

The tapered section rests on a plinth 31 inches square and 26 inches high. It is inscribed on the front

ERECTED BY
GENERAL BROCK CHAPTER
DAUGHTERS OF THE EMPIRE
IN MEMORY OF
MAJOR GEN. SIR ISAAC BROCK K.C.B.
PROVISIONAL LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
OF UPPER CANADA

WHO FELL OCT. 13, 1812

FIGHTING FOR KING AND COUNTRY

The plinth has on each side a fluted half bowl with water supply.

The plinth rests on a two level base, with steps on the south side. The whole monument is about 10 feet in height. The work has aged well, is tasteful and appropriate to Brockville and the memory of the distinguished soldier whose name the city bears.

REFERENCES:

1. The Incredible War of 1812, J. MacKay Hitsman
p. 13, 16-18 & 88-90
2. History of Leeds and Grenville; T.W.H. Leavitt
p. 197
3. Oxford Companion to Canadian History and Literature-Norah Story
4. Minutes, General Brock Chapter Daughters of the Empire, 1902-1912

D. Recommendation:

The Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee recommends that the Brock Monument be designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, 1974 for historical and architectural reasons. Continuation of maintenance of the monument is also recommended.

The monument is particularly important in view of the name of the city. It occupies a prominent position and is an attractive feature of the Court House Green/Court House Avenue/Broad Street vista.