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Machias Seal Island, New Brunswick  
**Lighthouse**  
Machias Seal Island Light Station

### **HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

The Machias Seal Island Lighthouse was built in 1914 to designs by the Marine Department. New lighting equipment and fog horns have been installed since it was constructed. It remains in active use as a lighthouse, while the island is now a migratory bird sanctuary. The custodial department is Transport Canada, Canadian Coast Guard. See FHBRO Building Report 87-1 25.

### **Reason for Designation**

The Machias Seal Island Lighthouse was designated Recognized because of its association with important historical themes, its highly functional design combined with classical proportions and its importance within its environment.

The original Machias Seal Island lighthouse and subsequent replacements have been important navigational aids since 1832, serving as entrance lights to the Bay of Fundy for ships approaching from the south. Moreover, the original construction by colonial New Brunswick and the continued presence of a Canadian lighthouse established a sovereignty claim over the island, disputed by the United States and not fully recognized in law until 1925.

The design of the current lighthouse represents an early and successful adaptation of reinforced concrete to the functional requirements of a lighthouse, while retaining classical design elements from an earlier period of lighthouse design. The tower is a dominant element in its isolated remote setting.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of the lighthouse is defined by its exterior form and materials, its functional design and its relationship to its setting.

The lighthouse is of octagonal design, with a classically arranged base, tapered shaft and capital. The projecting base (not part of historic fabric) is further delineated by a projecting string course. Windows, with pediment-shape lintels, are located in the shaft. The capital is provided by the flared top of the shaft on which rests the metal lantern. The smooth surface of the concrete, although not scored in this example, approximates the masonry typically found in a classical structure.

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Machias Seal Island, New Brunswick  
**Lighthouse** (Continued)

The Machias Seal Island lighthouse, one of the earliest of its type, represents a rationalization of the evolving reinforced-concrete technology. It is a relatively thin shell without the buttresses or internal framing supports associated with earlier examples.

A program of regular inspection and repair should be instituted if not already in place. Future repairs should be undertaken under the guidance of conservation specialists with knowledge of historic concrete. The basic form, classical detailing and function of the structure should be preserved.

Machias Seal Island in the Bay of Fundy is a 15-acre remote, treeless outcropping of granite, home only to lighthouse personnel and, more recently, ornithologists managing the bird sanctuary. The rugged open nature of the setting, in which the lighthouse is a local landmark, should be preserved.

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