

**FHBRO HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT
MAUGHER'S BEACH LIGHTTOWER
MCNABS ISLAND, NOVA SCOTIA**

FHBRO Number: **07-085**
DFRP Number: **02877**
Resource Name : **Maugher's Beach Lighttower**
Address: **Maugher's Beach Lightstation, McNabs Island, Nova Scotia**
FHBRO Status: **"Recognized" Federal Heritage Building**
Construction: **1941**
Designer : **Department of Marine**
Original Function: **lighttower**
Current Function : **lighttower**
Modifications: **automation of light equipment (1983)**
Custodian : **Department of Fisheries and Oceans**

Description of Historic Place

The Maugher's Beach Lighttower is a freestanding tapered octagonal tower, which stands 17,8 meters or three storeys tall. It is a concrete structure, painted in white and crowned with a red aluminium octagonal lantern. The tower stands on a sandspit extending from Maugher's Beach into the main western sea lane from the Atlantic Ocean to Halifax Harbour, of which it marks the entrance.

Heritage Value

The Maugher's Beach Lighttower is a « Recognized » Federal Heritage Building because of its historical associations and its architectural and environmental values.

Historical value :

The Maugher's Beach Lighttower is associated with the theme of aids to navigation in Canadian waters. It serves as a range light marking the entrance to the Halifax Harbour, yet, with its powerful 15 nautical mile range, it is visible from fairly far out at sea. The light is identified with an international number, indicating its importance at the level of international navigation and its strategic position near the entrance to one of the world's largest harbours. The tower was built in 1941 on one of Canada's earliest longstanding lighthouse locations, and marks the time when significant upgrades were carried out in Halifax's harbour during WWII.

Architectural value :

The Maugher's Beach Lighttower was built following a standard design for tapered concrete octagonal towers established in the 1920's, where the traditional classical inspiration of its composition and proportions was combined with streamlined details, which reflect a modernist influence. Developed by the Department of Marine, this is a functionally good, tried and true standard design. The lighttower was competently built using standard technology and modern utilitarian materials, all of which contributed in fulfilling the requirements for stability and dependability in harsh weather conditions.

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Environmental value :

The Maugher's Beach Lighttower sits in a very prominent position, marking the transition between the inner and outer harbour. It stands out against the horizontal topography of its surroundings and reinforces the marine character of the outer Halifax Harbour. Located on the extremity of a sandspit extending out of McNab's Island, the site consisted initially of a small lightstation complex. The character of the site has since been altered by the loss of several ancillary buildings. The lighttower is an obvious physical landmark, and as the first or last light to be seen by the many immigrants and soldiers who arrived or departed the continent respectively, it also bears a strong symbolic significance.

Character-Defining Elements

The character-defining elements of the Maugher's Beach Lighttower include, among others:

The features that illustrate the theme of aids to navigation in Canadian waters:

- The tower's location on one of the earliest longstanding lighthouse locations in Canada, at the threshold between the inner and outer harbours of Halifax;
- Its standardized design as a freestanding octagonal concrete lighttower, which was widely used across Canada during that period.

The tower's good aesthetic and functional design combining both traditional and modernist influences, and its good quality of materials and craftsmanship, as manifested in:

- The three-part composition of a prominent stepped base, with a plinth and shallow continuous string course, the gently tapered octagonal shaft and the prominent flared cornice which supports the railed gallery and lantern;
- The simple arrangement of its three window openings along the shaft;
- The small shed-roofed entrance vestibule at the base;
- The recessed octagonal lantern with its low-pitched roof and ventilator;
- The use of the traditional red and white color-scheme, typical of lighttower design;
- The simplified and streamlined detailing, such as the flat lintels that project slightly over the windows;
- The simple, utilitarian interior plan comprising of a vestibule and a space with the stairway connecting the three levels and the lantern; and,
- The use of standard building technology and good quality modern utilitarian materials, including the reinforced concrete construction of the shaft and lightweight aluminium for the lantern, which contribute to the reliability of the design.

The manner in which the structure reinforces the maritime character of the area and acts as a landmark, as evidenced in:

- Its prominent position on the extremity of a low-lying sandpit and in the midst of a predominantly

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- horizontal seascape; and,
- Its recognizable silhouette, simple form and traditional colours.

For guidance on interventions, please refer to the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*. For further information, contact FHBRO.

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