

FHBRO HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT LIGHTHOUSE, CAPE NEGRO ISLAND, NS

FHBRO Number: **04-138**
DFRP Number: **12009**
Resource Name: **Lighthouse**
Address: **Municipality of the District of Barrington,
Shelburne County,
Cape Negro Island, Nova Scotia**

FHBRO Status: **"Recognized" Federal Heritage Building**
Construction: **1915**
Designer: **Department of Marine and Fisheries**
Original Function: **Coastal light**
Current Function: **Unchanged**
Modifications: **None significant**
Custodian: **Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada**

Description of Historic Place

The lighthouse is a tapered octagonal reinforced concrete structure with simple detailing and balanced proportions. Dominating a rugged open landscape, it is 12.8 metres high and is painted in the traditional Coast Guard red and white colour scheme. The designation is confined to the footprint of the building.

Heritage Value

The lighthouse is a "Recognized" Federal Heritage Building because of its historical associations, and its architectural and environmental values.

Historical value:

The lighthouse is a very good example of the federal government's construction of lighthouses along the country's coast for use as navigational aids. The current reinforced concrete lighthouse was built in 1915. It replaced a wooden octagonal light built in 1887, itself a replacement of an 1872 tower. Both earlier lighthouses were situated 1.3 kilometres north of the current location. The lighthouse is categorized as a "coastal light", which is a category mid-way between a "landfall light" and a "harbour light". The lighthouse is significant for the community because of its association with the Perry Family. Freeland Perry, fisherman and the island's barber, was the light keeper between 1916 and 1943. His son-in-law, Harry Perry, one of the two violin players for the island dances, served as the light keeper between 1943 and 1963. The lighthouse is also a very good example to illustrate a significant phase of the community. It was built in response to the changes of technologies that permitted fisherman to travel further to the fishing grounds. The coastal marine traffic increased and, for safety reasons, there was a need for a coastal light that could be visible to vessels approaching Negro Harbour from both the east and the west, hence the new location at the seaward extremity of the island.

Architectural value:

The lighthouse is a good example of the standard design for the "tapered octagonal" reinforced concrete light towers designed by the Department of Marine and Fisheries. It is a sturdy structure with simple detailing and balanced proportions. The lighthouse represents a good functional design. It belongs to a

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group of towers built between 1906-1915 by the Department of Marine and Fisheries, as the department experimented with different shapes, and early use of reinforced concrete. The tapered octagonal reinforced concrete design was the department's third design iteration and at this point the design had evolved and the use of reinforced concrete was well understood. The structure was constructed in a competent way with simple detailing. It has performed well and remains in good structural condition even after 90 years of strong coastal weathers.

Environmental value:

The lighthouse reinforces the present character of the Island. It is a man-made structure in a deforested landscape. Furthermore, It is highly compatible with its rugged maritime landscape. The overall character of the site has been retained since it was built; the lighthouse still dominates the site, surrounded by an open space of rock outcrops and low wild grasses and the views are still open to and from the sea. As a coastal light, the lighthouse is a familiar landmark to the community of mariners.

Character-Defining Elements

The following character-defining elements of the lighthouse should be respected:

The lighthouse's functional design and location, which illustrate a significant phase in the development of the community. Built in response to an increase of coastal marine traffic, it was built at the seaward extremity of the island in order to be visible to the vessels approaching from east and west, even from far distances.

The lighthouse's good aesthetic design with simple detailing and balanced proportions as manifested in:

- The attractive 12.8 metres high tower (base to vane) with a plinth-like base, a tapered shaft with a well defined octagonal shape and a flared cornice;
- The vertical alignment of the windows that adds a sense of order in the design; and
- The details which conform to the traditions of Canadian lighthouses of this epoch: red and white colour scheme, a red lantern of standard depth, and the classical details such the use of pedimented window caps.

The lighthouse's good functional design, which represents an evolved design where the use of reinforced concrete was well understood, as demonstrated in its tapered octagonal reinforced concrete design.

The material and workmanship as manifested in:

- The form and texture of the surfaced concrete; and
- The simple and standard details.

The character of the site that has been retained since it was built, the reinforcement of the rugged maritime character, and the role of the lighthouse as a familiar landmark for the community of mariners, as evidenced in:

- The presence of the lighthouse that dominates an open space of rock outcrops and low wild grasses;
- The views that are open to/from the sea;
- The man-made character of the lighthouse compatible with a deforested and rugged maritime landscape;

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and

- The use of the lighthouse as a coastal light.

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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