

**FHBRO HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT
GABARUS LIGHTTOWER
GABARUS, NOVA SCOTIA**

FHBRO Number: **05-205**
DFRP Number: **03647**
Resource Name: **Gabarus Lighttower**
Address: **Gabarus, Nova Scotia**
FHBRO Status: **"Recognized" Federal Heritage Building**
Construction: **ca. 1890**
Designer: **Department of Marine and Fisheries**
Original Function: **lighthouse**
Current Function: **lighthouse**
Modifications: **kerosene-oil burner replaced by electric light (1964); removal of exterior wood detailing (date unknown); application of vinyl siding over wood (date unknown)**
Custodian: **Department of Fisheries and Oceans**

Description of Historic Place

The Gabarus Lighttower consists of a hexagonal, tapered, wooden lighttower, topped by a hexagonal, metal-and-glass lantern. The design of the lighttower includes a wood-frame structure, a straight cornice, a railed gallery, a gable-roofed entrance vestibule projecting from the wall and displaying contrasting white and red colours. The lighttower is set in an isolated area on the sparsely populated, rugged coastline of Cape Breton. The tower sits on a small hill overlooking the harbour at the entrance of Gabarus Bay near the small village of Gabarus. The designation is confined to the footprint of the building.

Heritage Value

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

Historical value:

The Gabarus Lighttower is a useful example of the theme of aids to navigation in Canadian waters. As a medium harbour light with a range of eight nautical miles located at the entrance to Gabarus Harbour, it guides small fishing boats and recreational boaters through the shallow waters of the channel leading into the harbour. Built in ca.1890, the Gabarus Lighttower is a very good example to illustrate the prosperity of Gabarus at the end of the 19th century. Today, the lighttower continues to serve a broad community comprised of several villages within a 24-kilometer radius.

Architectural value:

The Gabarus Lighttower is a good example of the few surviving kind of wooden, tapered, lighttower with a hexagonal configuration. The lighttower presents good proportions, and despite the loss of some of its original detailing and the addition of vinyl siding, it retains good visual qualities. Built to a standard plan prepared by the Department of Marine and Fisheries, its simple plan reveals good functional quality. With its sturdy

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construction, the lighthouse reveals good quality of craftsmanship and materials, and has withstood the natural elements over an extended period.

Environmental value:

The presence of the Gabarus Lighttower in a remote and natural landscape reinforces the maritime character of the area. Set on a rocky coastline in a sparsely populated region, it is surrounded by glacial till, sands and gravel. This relationship between the lighttower and its site has been retained. Due to its prominent location, the lighttower is visible from various points in the village of Gabarus. The lighttower is a well-known reference point for the local community and a familiar landmark for the small-scale fishers and recreational boaters who use this area.

Character-Defining Elements

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

Features that illustrate the theme of aids to navigation in Canadian waters, notably:

- Its standard-plan lighttower design;
- Its continuing use as a medium harbour light; and,
- Its location at the entrance to Gabarus Harbour.

Its good aesthetic design, good functional design, and good quality of craftsmanship and materials, as manifested in:

- Its good proportions and simple massing, characterized by a hexagonal base, tapered walls, and a straight cornice supporting a railed gallery and a hexagonal lantern;
- Its gable-roofed entrance vestibule projecting from the wall;
- Its simple functional plan and sturdy construction;
- The use of white colour for the shaft and red colour for the roof and lantern; and,
- The use of durable materials such as a wood framing and siding and a metal-and-glass lantern.

The manner in which it reinforces the maritime character of the area and functions as a reference point for the local community, as evidenced in:

- Its prominent location on a small hill overlooking the harbour at Gabarus Bay;
- Its isolated siting, facing the shoreline on three sides, set apart from the village of Gabarus and accessible by a gravel road; and,
- Its visibility from various points in the village of Gabarus.

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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