

FHBRO HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT CAPE RAY LIGHTTOWER CAPE RAY, NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

FHBRO number: **06-030**
DFRP number: **0070**
Resource name: **Cape Ray Lighttower**
Address: **Cape Ray, Newfoundland and Labrador**
FHBRO status: **"Recognized" Federal Heritage Building**
Construction: **1959-60**
Designer: **Department of Transport**
Original function: **Lighttower**
Current function: **Lighttower**
Modifications: **No known modifications**
Custodian: **Fisheries and Oceans Canada**

Description of Historic Place

The Cape Ray Lighttower consists of a freestanding reinforced concrete tapered octagonal tower surmounted by an aluminum and glass lantern. The concrete lighttower is painted white and features a red day marker. Situated in an isolated area on the southwest coast of the island of Newfoundland, the lighttower is located at the highest point of land in the lightstation and is surrounded by relatively modest structures. The designation is confined to the footprint of the building.

Heritage Value

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

Historical value:

The Cape Ray Lighttower is a very good example to illustrate the theme of aids to navigation in Canadian waters. With a range of 17 nautical miles, it provides guidance to international and coastal shipping at the southwest coast of the island of Newfoundland. Constructed in 1959-60, the existing lighttower is the third lighttower to be constructed on the site. The first lighttower, constructed in 1871, was destroyed in a fire in 1885 and its successor was damaged in a conflagration in 1959. The current lighttower is a late example of the types of facilities erected by the Government of Canada to fulfill its commitment of providing and maintaining aids to navigation in Newfoundland after the Confederation of Newfoundland with Canada in 1949.

Architectural value:

The good aesthetic qualities of Cape Ray Lighttower are derived from its graceful proportions created by the tall octagonal shaft surmounted by an octagonal lantern. This simple, utilitarian design was widely used across Canada in the 1950s and the 1960s. The basic interior layout of the tower adequately fulfills the simple functional program of providing support to the lantern and warning ships of the proximity of the coastline. Built according to a standard plan prepared by the Department of Transport, using durable materials such as concrete and steel and good quality craftsmanship, the structure has endured well despite its exposure to harsh climatic conditions.

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Environmental value:

Facing a rocky and isolated shoreline in an open and flat land, the Cape Ray Lighttower is a prominent structure within the lightstation and its surrounding natural landscape, and reinforces its maritime setting. The lighttower is situated on the highest point of land, accessed by a single road and surrounded by relatively modest structures. Despite the removal of obsolete and redundant service buildings and the addition of several others, the site continues to possess the essential elements of a lightstation and the relationship between the lighttower and its site has been retained. The lighttower is a familiar landmark known to the community, the maritime traffic, and the many visitors who are drawn to the region because of the site long and meaningful history.

Character-Defining Elements

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

Features that illustrate the theme of aids to navigation in Canadian waters for international and coastal shipping:

- Its prominent and visually exposed location on the southern most tip of the island of Newfoundland; and,
- The use of a standardized free-standing octagonal concrete lighttower design which was widely used across Canada in the 1950s and the 1960s.

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

- The tapered, octagonal form of the lighttower consisting of the tall shaft surmounted by an octagonal lantern;
- The simple, functional aesthetic of the tower with minimum decorative elements consisting of smooth concrete surface, a flared cornice, and projecting concrete hood over the window and door openings;
- The prefabricated glazed aluminum lantern and the surrounding exterior open walkway protected by steel handrails;
- The horizontal red band day marker on the upper portion of its shaft;
- The simple, utilitarian interior plan comprising of a vestibule and a space with the stairway connecting the three levels and leading to the lantern;
- The symmetrical placement of the openings, consisting in three small windows stacked vertically on the rear elevation and a door centrally located; and,
- The use of standard methods of construction and durable materials consisting of concrete, steel, aluminum, and glass.

The manner in which the lighttower reinforces the maritime character of its remote location on the shoreline, as evidenced in:

- Its prominent location on the highest point of a remote seashore;
- Its recognizable silhouette, simple form and traditional colours; and,
- Its focal and dominant presence within the light station.

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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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