

FHBRO HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

RED ROCK LIGHTTOWER

RED ROCK ISLAND, ONTARIO

FHBRO Number: **06-085**
DFRP Number: **11515**
Resource Name: **Red Rock Lighttower**
Address: **Red Rock Lightstation, Red Rock Island, Ontario**
FHBRO Status: **"Recognized" Federal Heritage Building**
Construction: **1911**
Designer: **Department of Marine and Fisheries**
Original Function: **lighthouse**
Current Function: **lighthouse**
Modifications: **loss of balcony railings and exterior metal ladder (date unknown), some windows filled in with concrete blocks (date unknown), addition of a concrete helipad (1970s), and addition of a helipad on the roof (1970s).**
Custodian: **Fisheries and Oceans Canada**

Description of Historic Place

The Red Rock Lighttower is a distinctive combined lighthouse and dwelling that consists of a three-storey concrete structure with rounded sides and a steel plate base. The lantern sits in the centre of the flat roof, which is encircled by a metal railing and where a large steel helipad has been added. The lighttower stands on a tiny wave swept rock surrounded by the open waters of Georgian Bay.

Heritage Value

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

Historical value:

The Red Rock Lighttower is a very good illustration of the theme of aids to navigation in Canadian inland waters at a time of rapid economic development in the Great Lakes area. The lighthouse was constructed in 1911 to solve the engineered problems inherent to the wave swept conditions of the site, for which the two previous wooden structures proved inadequate. The lighthouse serves as a coastal light and is part of a network of lights that guide maritime traffic to Parry Sound. It is associated with two keepers who maintained the light for an impressive number of years and were important figures in the folklore of the community: Adam Brown, from 1898 to 1937, and Lawrence Tyler, from 1938 to 1960.

Architectural value:

The Red Rock Lighttower is a good example of a distinctive style of combined dwelling with a very unique design in the context of Canadian lighthouses. It is notable for its good proportions and imposing massing, its architectural treatment inspired by industrial and nautical design, the contrasting textures and colours between the base and upper storey, the symmetrical arrangement of the openings on the elevations and projecting balconies above the double entrance doors. Built according to plans prepared by the Department of Marine and Fisheries, it is a very good example of the response to the combined functional requirements of a dwelling and light in a remote and isolated location, and its interior spaces are remarkable for their division into three functional levels. The lighthouse was well built, using proven technologies, durable and weighty materials and very good quality of craftsmanship, which is reflected by its good current condition despite its exposure to a harsh environment.

FEDERAL HERITAGE BUILDINGS REVIEW OFFICE
National Historic Sites Directorate, Parks Canada
25 Eddy Street, 5th Floor, Gatineau, QC K1A 0M5
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Environmental value:

As the main built structure on the rock and surrounded by vast expanses of water, the Red Rock Lighttower is compatible with the maritime character of the area, with its scattered set of islets. The addition of a concrete helipad is the only change to the site and the relationship between the lighttower and the rock on which it stands retains its isolated maritime character. The lighttower is well known to the boaters who navigate in open waters of Georgian Bay on their way to Parry Sound, and is also frequently visited during the navigational season and recognised by the Carling Township Council for its historic value.

Character-Defining Elements

The character-defining elements of the Red Rock Lighttower that should be respected include:

The features that illustrate the theme of aids to navigation in Canadian inland waters during the economic development of the Great Lakes, notably:

- Its strategic location as a navigational aid in the open waters of Georgian Bay and as part of a chain of lighthouses providing direction to Parry Sound.

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

- The imposing massing and good proportions of the three-storey structure, with its iron lantern centered on its railed flat roof;
- The architectural treatment inspired from industrial and nautical design, as expressed by the steel base, rounded walls, horizontal banding, prominent roof cornice, and overall streamlined profile;
- The contrasting textures and colors between the red riveted steel plates of the base and the smooth white concrete walls above;
- The symmetrical arrangement of the small openings on the elevations and the two projecting balconies centered above the double entrance doors;
- The integration of dwelling and light-keeping space with interiors divided into three functional levels: a storage and mechanical space on the ground floor, an emergency generator room on the second floor, and the keeper's living quarters on the third floor;
- The use of durable and weighty materials, such as reinforced concrete and steel plates, which have endured well over a long period; and,
- The evidence of original detailing in the casting of ornaments and the presence of balconies.

The building's compatibility with the maritime character of the area and role as landmark for the region, as evidenced in:

- Its prominent position on a flat bare rock surface surrounded by water on all sides; and,
- The use of red and white colours, typical of lighthouse design.

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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March 2008

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