

FHBRO Number 90-066
Carmanah, British Columbia
Lighthouse

The Carmanah lighthouse was constructed in 1921-22. It was designed by the Department of Marine and Fisheries. The building continues to be used as a working lighthouse. The Canadian Coast Guard is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 90-066.

Reasons For Designation

The lighthouse has been designated Recognized because of its architectural importance and environmental significance, as well as for its historical associations.

This tapered octagonal concrete lighthouse is of interest architecturally for its stocky profile, pedimented doorway and balustrade which reveal the classical inspiration for the design. The small windows, gabled roof entrance and flared ribs at the platform contribute to the clean, uncluttered design of the tower.

The lighthouse functions as an important marker in the coastal environment. The building is well known in its locale and contributes significantly to the maritime character of the site.

Historically, the lighthouse is associated with the upgrading of existing navigational aids in the early 1900s to improve the safety of maritime commerce at remote coastal locations.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Carmanah lighthouse resides in its overall form, profile, construction materials, architectural details, and site relationships.

The tapered massing consists of a short shaft capped by a lantern walkway, and recalls the classical tripartite division of base, shaft and capital. The massing, profile and footprint should be respected in any alterations or additions, as should the proportional relationship of tower shaft to lantern. The prominent lantern, the coving and bracketing, the gallery guardrails, and the projecting windows and door are all features that merit protection through their on-going maintenance.

The character of the lighthouse facade is derived from the construction material, cast-in-place concrete, and from the classically inspired details. The simple coved cornice, the crisply executed pedimented entrance, and the sturdy balustrade contribute to the visually rich profile and should be carefully maintained and respected in any alterations. The change in material afforded by the painted steel and glass detailing of the lantern is expressive of the industrial character of this component and contributes to the textural character of the lighthouse. The concrete and steel merit an ongoing maintenance

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program employing conservation expertise.

The original windows were wood sash windows with small multiple panes which also contributed to the texture and detail of the facade. The contemporary replacement windows appear to be wood sashes, but have large-scaled single panes of glass. When replacing windows, consideration should be given to selecting windows that are sympathetic to the original design intent.

The surviving original interior materials and finishes of the lighthouse may be significant to the heritage character of the structure, and should be documented. Any modification to the interior should be predicated on maximum retention of original material.

The character of the site is defined by the cleared, predominantly grassed plane in the midst of a rain forest. If operationally appropriate, the site lines to the ocean and the relationship of the lighthouse to its associated buildings, walkways and fencing should be maintained. Existing ornamental shrub planting should not be expanded as it would undermine the utilitarian character of the site.

For further guidance, please refer to the *FHBRO Code of Practice*.

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