

Great Duck Island, Ontario
Great Duck Island Light Tower

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The light tower on Great Duck Island was built in 1918 to plans prepared by the Department of Marine and Fisheries. It replaced an earlier wooden light tower constructed in 1877. The custodian is Transport Canada, Canadian Coast Guard. See FHBRO Report 90-1 89.

Reasons for Designation

The light tower was designated Recognized, for its historical associations, its architectural design, and the importance of its setting.

The original light tower was constructed as a result of a programme to light the waters of northern Lake Huron. The octagonal design of the tower is an example of one of three main design types developed for the more than 40 reinforced concrete light towers built between 1906-1916.

The architectural design takes best advantage of the aesthetics of the design type. Its form reflects the long history of octagonal wooden towers in Canada, and its details reflect a classical revival at the time of construction.

The tower is significant to lake freighters, fishing tugs, and pleasure craft south of Manitoulin Island in Lake Huron. It is situated in an unchanged setting at the end of a heavily wooded island.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character resides in the tower's form, proportions, construction materials and details, and its environmental significance.

The white painted, cast-in-place concrete light tower is of octagonal design, and the elements are loosely modeled on a classical column with base, shaft, and capital.

The tower base is simply articulated with the entry door set between classically inspired pilasters, and a projecting triangular pediment above, all site-poured concrete. The four levels of windows are vertically stacked, with projecting caps and trims on the 70 foot high tapered shaft. This relationship contributes greatly to extending the apparent height of the tower.

The capital is expressed by the flared top of the tower upon which is placed the

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details create a dramatic profile, which should be maintained.

The six-paned windows and paneled door in their fine-scaled detail contribute to the classical references of the design, and are important features to be preserved.

The form of the light tower has not been altered since its construction. The interior planning is utilitarian with an interior metal stair providing access to the lantern. The width of the top of the tower is set by the size of the lantern.

The light tower has been maintained to departmental standards. The design characteristics and materials of the original reinforced concrete elements would be important to maintain. If defects in the concrete occur, conservation specialists should be consulted before repairs are implemented.

The tower is part of a lightstation set in a clearing on the heavily forested island. The buildings on the site have changed but the character of the lightstation is retained and this relationship should be maintained.

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