

Louisbourg, Nova Scotia  
**Louisbourg Lighttower**  
Cape Breton County

## **HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

The Louisbourg lighttower was built in 1923-24 by the Department of Marine and Fisheries. It is the property of Transport Canada and continues to serve as a coastal light and an indication of the entrance to the Louisbourg harbour. See FHBRO Building Report 90-267.

### **Reasons for Designation**

The Louisbourg lighttower was designated Recognized because of its association with the theme of aid to navigation, because of its historical and environmental significance as the site of the first lighthouse in Canada and the second on the North American continent, and for architectural reasons.

The current structure is the fourth lighttower on the site. Historic Sites and Monuments Board plaques on the tower commemorate the defence of Louisbourg by the French, and the fireproof lighthouse built after the first tower succumbed to fire.

The Louisbourg lighttower was built to a plan that appears to have been used only here and at George's Island in Halifax Harbour. Architecturally, it is more decorative than many of the reinforced concrete lighthouses built during the 20th century by the Department of Marine and Fisheries.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage value of the Louisbourg lighttower resides in its tapered octagonal form and classical detailing competently rendered in reinforced concrete, and in its relationship with the landscape and the remains of earlier towers on the site.

The classical influence is evident in the tower's columnar form, with its defined base, shaft and capital. The base - the lower storey - has deep horizontal channels and exaggerated voussoirs scribed in the concrete to simulate rusticated masonry. The shaft is smooth concrete pierced with pedimented windows. The capital is comprised of the lantern and lantern platform supported on decorative brackets. The octagonal lantern, which is original, continues the vertical lines of the shaft.

Exterior features and finishes which contribute to this differentiation of base, shaft and capital should be preserved. Alterations to windows and doors should seek to retain original material and respect the original configuration, and any proposed alterations to the interior should be preceded by an investigation of original finishes and features.

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**Louisbourg Lighttower** (Continued)

Apart from the free-standing fog alarm equipment, the lighttower is the only structure at

the site, standing out as a landmark on the coastline. This prominence in the landscape underscores the tower's function and should be preserved. Similarly, the traditional Canadian Coast Guard colour scheme of white with a red lantern contributes to the tower's visibility and is the most historically appropriate scheme for the structure. Near the base of the tower, the remains of earlier structures are interpreted for the benefit of visitors, but the site is otherwise rugged and natural in character and should be retained as such.

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