

FHBRO Number 96-029

St-André, Québec

Brandy Pots Island Lighthouse

Kamouraska/Rivière-du-Loup

The Brandy Pots Island Lighthouse officially commenced operations in 1862. Its technical specifications were signed by John Page, an engineer with the Department of Public Works, who probably also drew up the plans. The light system was replaced with an automated battery-powered system in 1964. The lighthouse ceased operations in 1975, and the light was removed three years later. After ten years in limbo, the lighthouse was restored by Duvetnor, a not-for-profit corporation, which now operates as an environmental tourism attraction. The Canadian Coast Guard still owns the lighthouse. See FHBRO Report No. 96-29.

Reasons for Designation

The Brandy Pots Island Lighthouse has been designated Classified because of its exceptional environment, unique architecture, and historical associations.

The historical link between the lighthouse and its original site remains today despite the fact that the outbuildings were replaced with new structures, which are nonetheless compatible with the whole. Built on an outcropping of rock, the lighthouse has a commanding view of the natural landscape of the national wildlife reserve in the estuary islands. Visiting the site has long been a seasonal favourite among local residents; and since it was re-opened, this heritage site has become a major attraction in the Lower St. Lawrence region.

The lighthouse design was particularly successful at harmoniously combining the dual roles of mariner's landmark and residence in one structure. It is the only remaining example of this hybrid style on the St. Lawrence, and is undoubtedly the most elegant specimen of such a dual-purpose building in Canada.

Construction of the Brandy Pots Island Lighthouse in 1860 grew out of a policy of improving shipping safety on the St. Lawrence promulgated by the Québec office of Trinity House. Trinity House later endeavoured to reduce the isolation of communities along the river by enhancing shipping safety, thus contributing to the growth of the local and regional economy.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Brandy Pots Island Lighthouse resides in its singular design, the quality of materials and workmanship, and the excellent restoration in 1990 by Duvetnor.

The lighthouse consists of a 30-foot cylindrical tower rising out of the centre of the lightkeeper's square home, which measures 30 feet along each side. This symmetrical

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composition was modified by the addition of a summer kitchen on the north side and an enclosed entryway, which was later removed. The summer kitchen is now an integral part of the building. Any future work should not alter the current volume, as it is now part of the history of the lighthouse.

The roof of the lightkeeper's home is built around the tower and slopes down on four sides. The exterior walls are clapboard and the windows are multi-paned. In the 1990 restoration, all original colours were retained except on the windows, the light, and the chimney, whose original red-on-white contrast was eliminated. The original colour scheme was intended to make the lighthouse more visible, and its significance should not be underestimated. Restoring the original colours would be desirable.

The central tower dictated the interior layout of the house, and occupied the space normally used for traffic. The portion of the exterior tower walls that is visible inside the house is coated with rough plaster, and above the roof, the tower walls are clad with painted steel plate. A sturdy wood spiral staircase in the centre of the tower leads to the light. While still in his home, the keeper could check the colour of the light by looking through a small hole in the tower wall. The tower is the heart of the architectural unit, and the details of its construction should be conserved.

The lightkeeper's home is a one-storey dwelling. The main entrance opens into a small hall that leads directly to the tower. The large room to the left was probably used as a common room after the kitchen was built. Storage was provided in the rooms to the right of the hall, the storeroom, and another small, windowless room. The rear of the building was arranged as a series, of linked rooms, with communicating doors rather than a shared hallway. This original layout was not altered when the lighthouse was restored; any changes in the use of the building should not compromise this integrity.

Owing to the high quality materials, workmanship and maintenance, the lighthouse has withstood the effects of time and weather to a remarkable degree. Much of the original materials have been conserved, i.e., the clapboard cleaned and repainted, the shingles brushed and treated, the floors and stairs refinished. New wooden windows were fabricated based on the originals. The care taken with the original materials is exemplary, and should serve as a guide for future work on the building.

Incorporating the tower into the residence allowed a smaller total footprint, yielding a significant benefit where flat land is scarce. Access to the lighthouse is via a system of footbridges and stairs. The verandah was expanded to provide a view of one of the grandest vistas anywhere on the point. The outbuildings were rebuilt to the original designs, but now are used for different purposes. Although the site today is a tourist

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attraction, few aspects of its original appearance have changed. This integrity should not be compromised by the addition of new buildings or other elements incompatible with the original role of the site.

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

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Translation