

FHBRO HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT
LIGHT STATION, BICQUETTE ISLAND

FHBRO number:	96-69
DFRP number:	05469
Resource name:	Light Station: Foghorn Shed
Address:	Bicquette Island, Quebec
Construction:	1908
Original function:	Shelter for foghorn
Current function:	—
Custodian:	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
FHBRO status:	“Recognized” Federal Heritage Building

Reasons for Designation

The foghorn shed at the Bicquette Island Light Station has been designated a “Recognized” Federal Heritage Building because of its architectural and environmental value and its historical associations.

Historical value

The creation of the Lighthouse Board in 1904 led to a major program of construction and improvement of light stations on the eastern St. Lawrence River and the Gulf. Construction of the foghorn shed on Bicquette Island in 1908 attests to this period of modernization of marine infrastructure with the adoption of the foghorn, advanced technology at the time, which was used until the 1970s. At the local level, the building represents the first major technological facility to be introduced at the Bicquette Island Station to replace the cannons that were previously used as audible signals.

Architectural value

The small storey-and-a-half structure could easily be mistaken for a farmhouse were it not for the fact that it lacks the usual front and back doors, and has no porch or decorative elements of any kind. But the single wide door and roof vents suggest something less familiar. Indeed, its functional design was developed to suit its purpose, which was to house all the machinery required to operate the foghorn. The old equipment associated with this dedicated building is still in place, giving a clear indication of functional program constraints.

Environmental value

The environmental value of the foghorn shed derives from its relationship with its site, a small rocky promontory above the St. Lawrence. The association of the foghorn shed with the lighthouse (the only remaining structures from the earliest days of this light station) and with the other components of the station contribute further to its environmental value.

Character-Defining Elements

- The strictly utilitarian character of the building as a shelter for the foghorn machinery, and the elements that distinguish it from a dwelling: the absence of ornamental detail and the façade treatment normally found on rural homes; the single door wide enough to accommodate equipment; and the roof vents.
- The remaining foghorn machinery, as it attests to the advanced technologies developed in the early 20th century as safety improvements for marine traffic in the St. Lawrence River and Gulf, and because it is evidence of functional program constraints.
- The relationship of the shed with the site, a rock escarpment overlooking the St. Lawrence River, and the distinctive architectural features deriving therefrom, such as the raised foundation conforming to the irregular surface of the site (chosen to place the horn as close to the river and as high as possible for maximum audible range), and the orientation of the gable wall where the horn was mounted in relation to the river.
- The historical and functional associations of the foghorn shed with the other components of this light station, particularly the nearby lighthouse.

For guidance on interventions, please refer to the *FHBRO Code of Practice*. For further information contact FHBRO.

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