

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The upper light at Belle Isle SW is comprised of a tower with an attached keeper's dwelling. The dwelling was built in 1856, and the tower was completed in 1857 and lit in 1858. The plans for the tower and dwelling were produced by the Office of Public Works Canada. The custodian is Transport Canada, Canadian Coast Guard. See FHBRO Building Report 88-1 32.

Reasons for Designation

The upper light tower and attached dwelling were designated Recognized because of their historical association, their functional and aesthetic design and their environmental value.

The upper and lower lights at Belle Isle SW are associated with the establishment of aids to navigation. Their construction marked a major step in the development of the route around Newfoundland. The lower light was designed to illuminate the route when the upper light was obscured by fog. The upper and lower lights along with the secondary gable-roofed structures form a picturesque cluster of buildings characteristic of the maritime setting.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character resides in the form, massing, proportions, construction and materials of the tower and its attached dwelling, and in their site and setting.

The tower is characterized by a circular limestone structure encased in fire brick and clad in white painted pine shingles. The lantern, a round enclosure with a copper roof, is an important feature which should be preserved. The entrance shed, a later addition, is well integrated to the tower. The substantial proportions of the tower and the lantern are well balanced and the whole projects an air of solidity. The pine shingles which cover the original exterior layer of white fire bricks are essential to prevent the deterioration caused by extreme weather conditions. A regular maintenance program would contribute to the longevity of the tower.

The tower was designed to be as fireproof and as draftproof as possible. Evidence of this design such as the inside four flights of iron stairs leading to the lantern, the iron floors, and the hatch doors giving access to each flight of stair, should be retained.

The attached dwelling is a storey-and-a-half structure with a side-gabled roof. The wall construction, like that of the tower, is of stone, fire brick and shingles. The

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building's simple, yet pleasing proportions, the two separate entrance sheds, the roof's shape, with its projecting dormers and prominent end gable chimneys, should be respected in future renovations.

The regular arrangement of openings contribute to the balanced composition of the elevations. The multi-pane window configuration should be maintained.

The original interior disposition of rooms into two separate dwellings has been altered. Should the opportunity arise, consideration should be given in future alterations of reinstating the original double dwelling layout.

With red asphalt shingles on the roofs and white painted wood shingles on the exterior walls, the dwelling and tower exhibit the traditional colours characteristic of Canadian lightstations. When repainting, this colour scheme should be maintained.

The light tower with its attached dwelling and its surrounding secondary buildings and lower light, form a picturesque grouping of structures. Any new building should respect the scale and colour of the existing buildings and should not mar the profile of the prominent light tower.

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