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Gereaux Island, Ontario
Lighthouse and Dwelling
Georgian Bay

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Gereaux Island Lighthouse and Dwelling were built in 1880 to designs by the Department of Marine and Fisheries, under Chief Lighthouse Engineer Joseph Tomlinson. The structure consists of a tower with an attached lightkeeper's residence. The light is no longer operational, but the tower acts as a daymark. The Canadian Coast Guard is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 90-1 90.

Reasons for Designation

The Gereaux Island Lighttower with attached dwelling was designated Recognized as a result of its environmental qualities; its association with the provision of navigational aids on inland waters; and for architectural reasons.

The tower, located on an island along the north-east shore of Georgian Bay, replaces an earlier one constructed by local lumber interests. Built during the post-Confederation expansion of navigational aids, it was intended to meet the needs of regional commercial shipping.

The Gereaux Island Lighttower is one of a small number of square wooden towers with attached residences surviving intact from the nineteenth century. This form of lighthouse was designed for locations remote from settlement, and was intended to house the keeper and his family in reasonable comfort. Heavy timber and braced wood frame construction was employed, since it was sturdy, economical and easy to maintain. The tower exhibits the classical form favoured by nineteenth-century lighthouse designers.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of this structure is defined by its overall massing, classical references and use of materials, and importance in its setting.

The three-storey square tapered tower, surmounted by an octagonal lantern, exhibits the classical tripartite division into base (stone foundation), tapered tower, and capital (lantern platform). The attached gable-roofed dwelling is well integrated with the tower. This unified complex of tower and dwelling should be preserved, as should the overall form and profile.

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The regular spacing and vertical alignment of the tower's window openings is associated with the formal character of classical design and should be retained. Windows are currently boarded over, and should be uncovered and repaired as circumstances permit. The exterior has been covered in metal cladding; its removal would benefit the heritage character.

Some of the original decorative elaboration, such as the classical cornice, has been lost, but the door pediment is retained. All early exterior and interior finishes and fittings should be identified and preserved. Returning the structure to its early appearance based on physical and pictorial evidence would do much to restore the heritage character of this building.

Maintenance work is essential to ensure the structure's longevity. Vegetation should be kept clear of the structure and sheathing, and paint finishes maintained.

The light station is located on Gereaux Island, a small rocky island near Byng Inlet on Georgian Bay. Ancillary structures associated with its operation surround the lighthouse. Some of these are original, but others, such as the tall steel beacon and helicopter pad, are new. The rugged isolated character of the site should be preserved.

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