

**91 -1 81**

Bois Blanc Island, Ontario  
**Lighthouse**  
Fort Malden NHS

## **HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

The Lighthouse was constructed on Bois Blanc Island in 1836. It was commissioned by the government of Upper Canada; local tradition suggests that it was designed by Andrew Kemp of the Royal Engineers, Civil Branch, at Amherstburg. The lantern was removed and the entrance door blocked during the 1970s. Parks Canada is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 91-181

### **Reasons for Designation**

The Lighthouse was designated Recognized because of its historical associations, and also for architectural and environmental reasons.

The lighthouse relates to the development of navigational aids for maritime traffic on the Great Lakes during the 1830s. It was the third lighthouse constructed to improve the safety of Lake Erie navigation following increases in shipping activity. It is also related to the history of the local Hackett family, who were lighthouse keepers for three generations until the automation of the light in the 1970s.

The Bois Blanc Island lighthouse is an example of an Imperial tower design of the period 1830-1860. The tapered circular tower features sturdy proportions and a corbelled stone cornice. It is familiar to area residents.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of the lighthouse resides in its form, massing and overall proportions, construction materials and details, and relationship to the site and setting.

The tower consists of a tapered circular shaft with a flat top. The form follows the classical tripartite column division of base, body, and capital. The base and tapered shaft are linked, while the capital is expressed as stepped masonry corbelling. This form should not be compromised. The lantern was unfortunately destroyed in 1954; if the opportunity presents itself, reinstatement of this feature would improve the integrity of the form; otherwise it should be ensured that the top is securely capped and waterproof to prevent damage to the structure.

The shaft is pierced by a door and three windows which follow the internal stair. The functional arrangement of the apertures is typical for the building type and should not be altered.

.../2

Bois Blanc Island, Ontario  
**Lighthouse** (Continued)

The rough rubble limestone walls have irregular coursing and minimal detailing, including an arched opening for the door and a corbelled cornice. The masonry merits conservation expertise and regular maintenance. Early photographs suggest that the tower was painted white or lime-washed; research and investigation should be conducted to confirm this when painting is planned.

The multi-paned windows were installed during the 1970s restoration; they contribute to the detail and visual interest of the design and should be maintained. The door with semi-circular fanlight has since been removed and the opening infilled with masonry. Reinstating the entrance would improve the integrity of the design.

Typical of lighthouse interiors, the internal layout is simple and utilitarian, with a central stone stairway within the shaft. This should be respected. Any surviving early finishes or fixtures should be documented and maintained.

The simple informal character of the landscape should be maintained, with clearing as required to restore the visibility of the tower from the waterways based on historic photographs.

1996.03.15

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