

# FHBRO HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

## BUILDING 1081 – AMMUNITION BUNKER

### CFB GOOSE BAY, LABRADOR

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FHBRO number: **98-134**  
DFRP number: **01822**  
Resource name: **Ammunition Bunker (Building 1081)**  
Address: **CFB Goose Bay, Labrador**  
FHBRO status: **“Recognized” Federal Heritage Building**  
Construction: **1954**  
Designer: **Fay, Spofford and Thorndike, engineers**  
Original function: **Nuclear ammunition bunker**  
Current function: **Storage space**  
Modifications: **None identified**  
Custodian: **Department of National Defense**

#### **Description of Historic Place**

Building 1081 is a low profile, concrete bunker, set into earthworks. It possesses one large vehicle door, centered in its poured-concrete façade. The door gives access to a large room, with a smaller room partitioned off and accessible by a loading ramp. The designation is confined to the footprint of the building.

#### **Heritage Value**

Building 1081 is a “Recognized” Federal Heritage Building because of its historical associations, and its architectural and environmental values.

##### Historical value:

Used for armament storage, Bunker 1081 is directly associated with the original function of the Goose Bay base as a part of the Strategic Air Command network, established to deter a Soviet attack on North America. As such, it constitutes a very good example of the theme of joint Canadian and American defense initiatives of North America during the Cold War. One of a group of six ammunitions bunkers, the first known structures intended for the storage of nuclear weapons in Canada, this building is also associated with the first documented presence of nuclear armament on Canadian soil, an issue which raised national interest and controversy at the time. It was erected in the final phase of Goose Bay’s development during the Cold War.

##### Architectural value:

Designed for the American War Department by the engineering firm of Fay, Spofford and Thorndike, the building was intended first and foremost to serve specific functional requirements. Its utilitarian military design includes a good functional layout, and its sturdy permanent concrete structure, intended to withstand the harsh Labrador climate and potential enemy attacks, has endured well.

##### Environmental value:

By the nature of its function, the bunker was designed to disappear into its barren surroundings and still maintains this symbiotic relationship with the site. This concealment makes the structure compatible with the utilitarian military character of the air base, composed of sparsely placed

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clusters of large structures on a flat terrain. Although intentionally inconspicuous in appearance, the bunker has an iconic value and mythical significance through its historical associations.

#### **Character-Defining Elements**

The following character-defining elements of bunker 1081 should be respected:

Its good functional design, materials and craftsmanship as manifested in:

- The simplicity of the design, with its single plain elevation and centered vehicle opening, and the interior layout, consisting of two rooms, one of which is raised on a platform and accessible by a ramp;
- The use of poured concrete for the construction, which has ensured the permanence of the structure.

The building's compatibility with the military character of the Goose Bay airfield and symbiotic relationship to the site as evidenced by:

- The manner in which the bunker has been concealed into a grassed and bush-planted berm;
- Its location within a dispersed cluster of bunkers, widely separated from the remainder of the base.

For guidance on interventions, please refer to the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*. For further information contact FHBRO.

October 2004