

FHBRO Number 93-71

Cape Breton, Nova Scotia

Lone Shieling Shelter

Cape Breton Highlands National Park

The Lone Shieling Shelter at Cape Breton Highlands National Park (CBHNP) was constructed in 1942. The design was produced by the Engineering and Construction Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources for the National Parks. It was designed as a shelter for passers-by in the park. Canadian Heritage is now the custodial department. See FHBRO Building Report 93-71

Reasons for Designation

The Lone Shieling Shelter was designated Recognized because of its environmental significance, its unique architectural features and its important historical associations.

Environmental significance resides in the Shieling's rustic character, its setting in an old growth forest and its status as a well-known landmark along the Cabot Trail Highway.

The image of a Scottish "bothran" (a seasonal dwelling used by shepherds during the time of year when sheep were moved to graze on the highlands, away from the village) was chosen for this, one of the earliest structures in the park, to promote the traditional heritage of the local inhabitants from the crofter class of the Scottish Highlanders. This image is loosely interpreted through the massing and form of the shelter, and detailing of stonework, timber and thatch roofing, which give the shelter its significant rustic appearance. The design was influenced by images from "the Clachan," an exhibition in Glasgow of a Scottish village.

The establishment of the CBHNP in 1936 as one of the first national parks in the maritime provinces signalled the expansion of the National Parks system to eastern Canada. In order to highlight its physical resemblance to the Scottish Highlands, the National Parks Bureau adopted the Scottish theme. Professor S. Macintosh, who bequeathed the 100 acres of land for the park, requested that a small cabin be built in the same design as the Lone Shieling on the Isle of Skye in Scotland. A cairn erected beside the Shieling to commemorate this bequest makes reference to the Lone Shieling on the Isle of Skye and to the theme of the Scottish inhabitants of Cape Breton.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage value of the Lone Shieling Shelter resides in all aspects of its presentation as a bothran through its simple form, design and plan, its rustic materials and detailing, and its natural setting.

The shelter's simple form and massing are based on the rustic image of a bothran, replicated in the steeply pitched hipped roof, the rectangular footprint of the low

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massive stone walls and the four symmetrically placed openings. The form is suited to the topography and harmonizes well with the landscape. The form and massing are integral to the heritage character.

The interior of the Lone Shieling is typical of other Canadian National Park "basic shelters" in its simple

kitchen, the shelter is divided into two sections by log partitions. Light is provided by symmetrically placed doorways and windows. Stone benches provide seating for picnickers. The introduction of any further functions requiring a higher degree of services should be avoided.

The materials and construction of the shelter (fieldstone walls, wood frame and thatch roof) are detailed in a manner which contributes to the rustic character and thematic design. The flooring was originally planned to be tamped earth, which would have been more authentic to the bothran precedent, however flagstone flooring was used and is

The doorways and windows are simple openings with no frames, doors or sashes. These features merit protection. The masonry walls have a deliberately rough appearance in that the field stones vary in size and are placed in an irregular pattern using as little mortar as possible. The roofing frames of purlins and rafters are held in place by recesses at the outside edges of the masonry walls. The original sod roofing has been replaced with thatch. The methods and detailing of the construction contribute to the rustic appearance and merit ongoing conservation and maintenance. When roof replacement is required, the question of sod versus thatch should be examined with reference to the FHBRO and CRM policies.

The Lone Shieling Shelter is set within a roughly landscaped sloped clearing. A rubble stone retaining wall separates the site from the higher level of the Cabot Trail Highway. Gravel and flagstone paths connect the shelter to the edge of the Old Growth Acadian forest, reinforcing the picturesque qualities of the setting. The interrelationship of the shelter and its natural surroundings is an important component of heritage character.

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