

L'Isle-Verte, Québec
Maison Girard
371, route 132

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Maison Girard is a large scale Québec house located in the rural community of L'Isle-Verte. Local tradition states it was built by prosperous local businessman Louis Bertrand for the dowry of his daughter, placing the date of its construction in the mid 1830s. It was used for over a century as a farm residence, and was extended by the addition of a summer kitchen at about the turn of the century. In 1979 it was severed from its original farm land and sold to the Canadian government. The custodial department is Environment Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service. During the past decade it has been occupied as a seasonal residence and interpretation center by the Canadian Wildlife Service and the Société de conservation de L'Isle-Vert. See FHBRO Building Report 86-86.

Reason for Designation

The Maison Girard was designated Recognized primarily because it is a fine example of a large "maison québécoise" of the St. Lawrence Valley.

It served as a farm residence from the time of its construction in the mid 1830s until 1960, and its location in the midst of rolling farm lands together with its magnificent view of the St. Lawrence River provide it a beautiful and compatible setting. The building is an important local landmark.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage value of the Maison Girard resides in the characteristics of its composition which link it to the St. Lawrence Valley Québec house type. A two and a half storey structure of pièce sur pièce construction, it exhibits all of the traditional materials and features of this building type on a grand scale. These features are the balance and symmetry of its overall design and proportions, its elevated main floor and balanced five bay façade, medium bell-cast pitched roof, large front gallery, brick chimney and summer kitchen. Special care should be taken to safeguard these features by maintaining their safety, clarity and integrity.

The fine level of the craftsmanship and materials evident both on the interior and the exterior of the Maison Girard and its annex should be upheld in future work. The building also contains many interior features that refer to its long use as a farm residence, among them the plank floors and moulded plaster ceiling. These should be identified and retained

.../2

Reinstatement of traditional patterns of movement in the house and on the site would considerably enhance the building's association with its agricultural heritage. For example, returning the staircase in the main building to its original location would recapture the traditional design of the building.

The front yard of this building is currently being used as an outdoor interpretation center for artifacts. A change in the use of this area to a function more closely related to its traditional farm use is encouraged. Such an approach would considerably enhance the property.

Since the early history of the building is associated with the river, and the site of the house was clearly selected for its magnificent view, the introduction of any future obstruction between the site and the river should be discouraged.

In general, the major heritage defining characteristics of the Maison Girard can be protected by regular maintenance and repair, year round heating, and the introduction of safeguards to prevent fire damage and vandalism to its fabric.

1990.04.18