

Conception Bay, Brigus, Newfoundland
Lighthouse: North Head

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The lighthouse at North Head was built in 1885 under the direction of J.T. Nevill, Inspector of Lighthouses from 1871 to 1895. Although the building was manufactured in Britain, or assembled from parts ordered from a catalogue, there is increasing evidence to suggest that Nevill functioned as overall designer. Transport Canada, the Canadian Coast Guard, is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 89-208.

Reasons for Designation

The North Head Lighthouse was designated Recognized for its aesthetic and functional design, its historical associations, and its landmark qualities.

Sparsely detailed, the lighthouse is important as a modest, but intact, example of cast-iron construction technology. This light is one of about 26 lighthouses of prefabricated iron and steel construction, thought to be the only remaining examples of their type in Canada. Favoured because of their inexpensive cost, ease of erection, low maintenance requirements and long-term durability, these structures reflect the growing industrialization at the turn of the century, and the desire to achieve a design that would withstand the rigours of the Newfoundland coast.

The lighthouse, and the system of which it is a part, illustrate the theme of navigational aids in Newfoundland when it was a British colony with an economy almost totally oriented toward the sea.

The lighthouse admirably fulfils its role as a landmark on a high headland that marks the entrance to Brigus Harbour.

Character Defining Features

The heritage character of this lighthouse resides in its form, materials, construction details and setting.

The utilitarian character of the tower is reflected in its smooth tubular form and lack of decoration. There is no differentiation of the base of the tower, such that the shaft appears to rise directly from the stone on which it is erected. This, together with the vertical red and white stripe pattern of the paint scheme, creates a strong vertical emphasis that should be respected.

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North Head (Continued)

The construction system, comprised of cylindrical segments bolted together on the

interior face, should be respected, and repairs executed in like materials, or materials closely matched on the galvanic scale, to avoid galvanic corrosion. The base of the tower should be kept clear of vegetation and decaying matter, and a sound protective paint layer must be maintained. Regular inspection and maintenance, and consultation with a metals conservator, are recommended.

Alterations which might affect the structure's profile should be resisted.

The lantern with its triangular-shaped glazing and cap with ball-shaped finial comprise a focal point of the composition and should be preserved without alteration.

The rugged, exposed nature of the site contributes to the lighthouse's heritage character and landmark status. The sparse, utilitarian character of the site should be protected. The foundation ruins of ancillary structures should be stabilized and retained for future investigation.

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