

## **HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

The lighthouse at Pointe-au-Père, was built in 1909 to designs prepared by William P. Anderson, chief engineer of the Department of Marine and Fisheries. It was transferred by Transport Canada to Parks Canada in 1976. Under an agreement with the latter, the site on which the lighthouse sits is operated by the Corporation du Musée de la Mer, a local historical society. See FHBRO Building Report 90-11.

### **Reasons for Designation**

The lighthouse was designated Classified for its historic associations, is strong architectural importance and its exceptional environmental value.

The construction of the lighthouse in 1909, the third on the site, was the most significant element of a modernization program begun in 1903 at 14 light stations along the St. Lawrence River, from the Strait of Belle Isle to Pointe-au-Père. This program represented an effort to improve navigation along the St. Lawrence River in the early 20th century to meet the growing demands of trade. The site had also gained significance through the 19th century as a home for river pilots, its prominent position providing an excellent staging point for the required exchange of personnel. This function encouraged additional improvements to navigational aids during the period of light station modernization, including a new quay in 1902 and a Marconi Station in 1909.

The lighthouse is one of only five surviving examples of octagonal, flying buttress, reinforced concrete towers built by the Department. The use of concrete for lighthouse construction was introduced by the Department only three years before construction of the Pointe-au-Père light, and illustrated the desire of designers to develop a durable and relatively maintenance-free response to needs, in their modernization efforts. Still very much experimental in design and construction, by 1978 the original structure had badly deteriorated. Restoration works undertaken in 1980 have been careful to maintain form, materials, and details of original elements.

Though most of the buildings present on the site when the lighthouse was built have disappeared and been replaced by later structures, the site has preserved its essential identity as a light station. The lighthouse itself clearly establishes the character of the present site and is recognized both as a physical landmark of exceptional prominence and as a symbol of the site's navigational importance in Canadian history. This national importance was recognized by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada which designated it in 1976.

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### **Character Defining Elements**

The architectural importance of the lighthouse resides primarily in the aesthetic and functional integrity of the reinforced concrete tower and its contributing elements. The octagonal tower is reinforced by eight concrete flying buttresses, their webbed design supporting the structure at each of its three principal floor levels. The tower is capped by an encircling concrete walkway, itself supporting a glassed-in steel lantern, surmounted by a steel cupola and weathervane. An interior spiral stairway permits access to each level and to the lantern, and should be respected spatially and structurally in any future functional improvements. The domestic-scale entrance portico and the windows placed regularly at each level also make important contributions to the structure's value, and should be carefully maintained in future. The enabling mechanism for rotation and signaling of the light is still in place and should be preserved in future work.

The site has evolved with changes in lighthouse technology over time, and every effort should be made to maintain the site's present integrity, all existing component parts and the key role played by the lighthouse in defining existing site use patterns and visual relationships.

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