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DFRP Number 11512

Recognized Federal Heritage Building

POINTE-AU-BARIL, Ontario

Front Range Lighttower, Pointe-au-Baril Lightstation

The Pointe-au-Baril Front Range Lighttower was built on Georgian Bay in 1888-89 by contractor Charles Mickler for the federal Department of Marine and Fisheries. The present Lighttower, with integrated lightkeeper's dwelling, was the first building to be constructed at the site, although it was predated by a rudimentary beacon. The building was altered by the addition of two rooms and bathroom facilities in 1957. Aluminum siding and steel roofing were installed in 1989 and the tower balcony railing was replaced at an unknown date. Much of the structure's clapboard siding and wood detailing is still intact under the new siding and roofing. The custodian is the Canadian Coast Guard. The Lighttower was destaffed in 1983, but continues to house automatic coastal and range lights. Since 1995, the building has been leased to the local township, which operates a seasonal tourist attraction, museum and shop on the site.

Reasons for Designation

The Pointe-au-Baril Front Range Lighttower has been designated "Recognized" because of its historical and environmental significance:

Historical Significance

The Lighttower is associated with a 19th-century program to improve commercial navigation in Canada through the provision of navigational aids on the Great Lakes. It has continuously served its navigation function since it opened in 1889.

Architectural Significance

The Lighttower is an example of the numerous square-tapered wooden lighttowers, many with attached keeper's dwellings, which were erected by the Department of Marine and Fisheries during the 1870s and 1880s. By using cheap materials, utilitarian designs, and traditional construction methods, the Department sought to quickly establish lighthouses along all Canadian coasts.

Environmental Significance

The Lighttower's waterfront site on Georgian Bay is virtually unchanged since its construction. In addition to its navigational role, the Lighttower provides a physical and cultural focus for the Pointe-au-Baril area.

Character-Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Pointe-au-Baril Front Range Lighttower resides in the following character-defining elements:

- Its simple, functional design and traditional materials, including a square-tapered tower, hexagonal lantern, tower balcony, wooden construction, and integrated lightkeeper's dwelling. The seamless joining of the tower and dwelling by continuing the angle of the tapered wall contributes to the integrity of the original design.

- The Lighthouse's isolated site on a rocky promontory directly adjacent to the water's edge.

All maintenance and repair work, as well as future interventions, should respect these character-defining elements.

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