

Lighttower

Cap-des-Rosiers, Québec

The Lighttower at Cap-des-Rosiers was constructed in 1854-58. It was designed by John Page, Chief Engineer of the Department of Public Works. The original stone tower with brick and stucco exterior was reclad with white brick in 1954, and with white marble stonework in 1984. The semi-attached dwelling was demolished in 1957 and windows and doors were replaced in the mid-1980s. The tower has a fully automated operation. Transport Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard are the custodians. See FHBRO Building Report 93-62.

Reasons for Designation

The Lighttower was designated Classified because of its historical associations, its architectural importance, and its environmental significance.

The construction of the light at the mouth of the St. Lawrence River is associated with the development of the ports of Quebec City and Montréal. It is also linked to pressure exerted by steamship operators urging the government to improve maritime safety to reduce shipping losses along this major commercial waterway.

The Cap-des-Rosiers Lighttower is the tallest in Canada, and an early example of a tapered circular stone tower. A powerful silhouette with a simple form, it is symmetrical and simply detailed, characteristic of the so-called "Imperial" stone lighttower. The well-scaled, large faceted lantern is well proportioned to the tower and clearly expresses the utilitarian purpose of the design.

The simple maritime character of the original landscape and the relationships of the lighttower to the ancillary buildings are largely intact. The scale and silhouette of the lighttower makes it a focal point in the surroundings, contributing to the maritime environment as a functional element. The lighttower is a landmark - one of the best known towers in the region - and is widely promoted in tourist literature.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the lighthouse resides in its massing and overall proportions, construction materials, architectural details, interior layout, and site relationships.

The massing consists of a tall, tapered round shaft supporting a multi-faceted lantern. The simple external massing and circular footprint reflect the utilitarian purpose of the

structure and the clarity of this expression should be maintained. The profile with the projecting platform and metal struts are also integral to the character of the structure, as are the proportions and scale of the lantern.

The powerful presence of the building derives from its simple form with architectural embellishments kept to a minimum. Window openings are small and simply detailed. The current white marble facing with its simple detailing has value as part of the evolving character of the tower, and merits conservation expertise and on-going maintenance. The lantern gallery is supported by metal struts in lieu of stone corbeling. The utilitarian character of the metal struts contributes to the visual richness of the design and is compatible with the simple design of the tower and should be maintained.

The multi-paned sash windows and doors are replacement units which are compatible with original designs and contribute to the detail and visual interest of the tower. The arrangement of windows and doors is simple and functionally-driven, with four windows stacked one above the other. No new openings should be introduced.

The spiral stair with its simple pipe-rail guard at the interior should be retained. Where practicable any surviving early interior finishes should be preserved and incorporated in future work.

The austere landscape of the lighthouse, with neither trees nor shrubs, is characteristic of stations located in harsh coastal environments, and should be maintained. The layout of roads and pathways underscores the utilitarian nature of the site design, and should be respected.

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