

Lake Ontario
Main Duck Island Lighthouse
Main Duck Island

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Main Duck Island Lighthouse, which is 80 feet high, was erected in 1914 by the Department of Marine and Fisheries. The building is owned by Transport Canada and is administered by the Canadian Coast Guard. See FHBRO Building Report No. 88-105.

Reason for Designation

The Main Duck Island lighthouse was designated "Recognized" because of the key role it played in ensuring safe navigation in Lake Ontario, the elegance of its architecture and the effectiveness of its functional design, closely tied to its primary material, reinforced concrete.

The lighthouse built on Main Duck Island joined an existing trio of lighthouses which constituted the key navigational aids in this treacherous section of Lake Ontario. The architecture of this lighthouse is skillfully proportioned through the use of classical references and, unlike the first experiments with reinforced concrete for lighthouse construction in Canada, its design contains no buttresses, signalling a new assurance in the use of reinforced concrete.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of this octagonal lighthouse derives primarily from its configuration. Its long tapered profile consists of a base, shaft and capital. This aspect, as well as other details, such as the pediments surmounting the entranceways and the tri-partite division of the column, are classical features that should be preserved.

Over the years, the lighthouse has required relatively little maintenance, which suggests high quality execution, durable materials and a sound design. If repairs are needed, the original forms and materials should be respected. Reinstatement of the lower windows which are presently blocked would enhance the aesthetic qualities of the original 1914 design.

This lighthouse, with its lofty stature set in a pastoral setting, defines the panoramic character of the western tip of Main Duck Island. It would be desirable to leave this setting, which exemplifies the historical theme mentioned above, unchanged.