

**FHBRO HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT  
STRAWBERRY ISLAND COMBINED LIGHTHOUSE AND DWELLING,  
STRAWBERRY ISLAND, ONTARIO**

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FHBRO Number: **06-087**  
DFRP Number: **11080**  
Resource Name: **Strawberry Island Combined Lighthouse and Dwelling**  
Address: **Strawberry Island, Ontario**  
FHBRO Status: **"Recognized" Federal Heritage Building**  
Construction: **1881**  
Designer: **Department of Marine and Fisheries**  
Original Function: **lighthouse**  
Current Function: **lighthouse**  
Modifications: **removal of wooden storm shutters (date unknown); replacement of wooden sash windows by aluminium framed sash windows (date unknown); replacement of wooden handrail around observation platform (date unknown); automation of the light (1963); wood clapboard covered with aluminum siding (ca. 1985); enlargement of entrance deck (date unknown); installation of solar panels on the observation platform (date unknown)**  
Custodian: **Department of Fisheries and Oceans**

**Description of Historic Place**

The Strawberry Island Combined Lighthouse and Dwelling consists of a three-storey lighttower with an attached, one-and-a-half-storey, gable-roofed dwelling and a one-storey, shed-roofed kitchen. The square, tapered tower is topped by a straight cornice supporting a railed observation platform and octagonal lantern. Both dwelling and tower sections feature pedimented window surrounds projecting from the tapered walls. The lighthouse is located on a small, low-lying point of land at the northern tip of Strawberry Island, just off the northeastern shore of Manitoulin Island, and overlooks the North Channel in Lake Huron. The designation is confined to the footprint of the building.

**Heritage Value**

The Strawberry Island Combined Lighthouse and Dwelling is a "Recognized" Federal Heritage Building because of its historical associations, and its architectural and environmental values.

Historical value:

The Strawberry Island Combined Lighthouse and Dwelling is a very good illustration of the theme of aids to navigation in Canadian inland waters at a time of rapid economic development in the Great Lakes area. As the first light at this strategic location, the lighthouse was built in 1881 to guard the approach to a narrow section of the North Channel and served the developing fishing and shipping industry on Manitoulin Island and the port of Little Current. Over its long life, the lighthouse has been tended by a number of dedicated keepers, namely: Brian McKay, William Mackenzie, Roxy Smith and Alvin Stuart. The lighthouse is associated with the community's rapid growth linked to local industries, including lumbering and fishing on Manitoulin Island. It continues to operate as an aid to recreational vessels.

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## Architectural value:

The Strawberry Island Combined Lighthouse and Dwelling is a very good example of a combined square, tapered, straight-corniced tower and dwelling. It is notable for its pleasing proportions, its picturesque qualities, its use of red and white colours, its detailing and the vertical alignment of its window openings. Built according to plans prepared by the Department of Marine and Fisheries, it is a simple and elegant response to the combined functional requirements of dwelling and light. The lighthouse was well built, using durable materials and quality of the craftsmanship that reflects the standards of the time. The lighthouse has been carefully maintained over time and retains its appeal while it is used as a seasonal dwelling.

## Environmental value:

Surrounded by shoreline on three sides and resting on carefully tended grounds with an informal landscape of small trees, the Strawberry Island Combined Lighthouse and Dwelling reinforces the maritime character of the area. The lighthouse sits on a low plane within a nature reserve, isolated from other construction, and is only accessible by boat. Aside from for the enlargement of the deck around the entrance, the site has remained largely unchanged, and the relationship between the lighthouse and its surrounding landscape has retained its character. The lighthouse is well known to recreational boaters navigating the North Channel and is a celebrated symbol for the region.

## **Character-Defining Elements**

The following character-defining elements of the Strawberry Island Combined Lighthouse and Dwelling should be respected:

The features that illustrate the theme of aids to navigation in Canadian inland waters during the economic development of the Great Lakes, notably:

- Its design and materials typical of the combined square, tapered lighttower and dwelling; and,
- Its strategic location on a narrow section of the North Channel.

Its very good aesthetic design, very good functional design, and its good quality craftsmanship and materials, as manifested in:

- Its pleasing proportions and picturesque qualities, characterized by its form, low massing, tapered walls, straight cornice, and cast-iron octagonal lantern set within a railed observation platform;
- Its distinctive profile, consisting of a square tapered tower integrated with an attached one-and-a-half-storey gable-roofed dwelling and shed-roofed kitchen;
- The vertical alignment of window openings on each of three sides of the tower with pediments projecting from the tapered walls;
- Its simple interior plan, with living space located on each floor of the tower, as well as in the dwelling and kitchen extension, and wooden interior stairs providing access to the light;
- The use of basic durable materials, such as a wood frame construction clad with clapboard and set on a stone foundation; and,

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- The use of white colour for the walls and contrasting red colour for the window surrounds, lantern and roofs of the dwelling, which increase the structure's daytime visibility.

The manner in which the building reinforces the maritime character of the area and functions as landmark for the region, as evidenced in:

- Its siting on a low-lying point of land, isolated from other structures and surrounded by shoreline on three sides;
- Its prominent location on the northern tip of Strawberry Island; and,
- Its visibility from the water and the town of Little Current.

For guidance on interventions, please refer to the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*. For further information contact FHBRO.

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