

FHBRO Number 96-092

Triple Islet Group, British Columbia

### **Triple Island Lighttower**

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The Triple Island Lighttower was constructed in 1919-20. It was designed by Col. W. A. Anderson of the Department of Marine and Fisheries. Renovations to the interior of the building occurred in 1965. The building was designated a National Historic Site in 1974, and continues to be used as a lighthouse. The Canadian Coast Guard is the custodian. See FHBRO Case File No. 96-092.

#### **Reasons for Designation**

The Triple Island Lighttower was designated Recognized for its environmental associations, its architectural significance and also for historical reasons.

The Triple Island Lighttower is one of Canada's northernmost lighttowers, located in a remote area of the west coast. While the relationship between the building and its site has changed somewhat since the building's construction, the general character - that of a remote beacon rooted to a rock - has remained.

Towers of this type are examples of early modern uses for reinforced concrete, which at the time was a new building medium. This lighttower in particular offers a good example of Colonel Anderson's expertise. The design, based on classical styling, represents the designer's last lighttower design and its details were more elaborate than his previous towers.

The lighttower was erected during a period of improvement to navigational aids on the west coast of Canada. The building's site is one of the most northerly in Canada and was one of the Department of Marine and Fisheries most difficult engineering feats.

#### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of the Triple Island Lighttower resides in its classical design influences, its overall form and profile, and the nature of its setting atop a rugged, rocky site.

The Triple Island Lighttower is based on a simplified classical design and executed in reinforced concrete. The massing is strong and clean, consisting of the tower, octagonal in plan, attached to the east corner of a substantial cube (housing the dwelling and fog alarm mechanism). This massing is of interest and should be respected in any alteration.

The main entrance to the lighttower projects from the southeast elevation just beside the lighttower itself. The exterior elevations of the tower are divided vertically into the three main classical components of base, shaft and capital. Detailing is spare and

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sleek: the elevations of the dwelling and fog alarm portion of the complex are unornamented, with simple recessed panels and rectangular openings. The focus of the design, and of the structure's function, is the glazed circular lantern which is emphasized by the simplified yet prominent brackets at the roof cornice and under the lantern's platform. The exterior of the lighttower retains the characteristic form and materials of its original construction. Any proposed changes to the exterior should not compromise the profile, footprint, surface texture and colour of the tower.

The interior layout is based on a square floor plan broken down into a nine-square grid, with the tower incorporated into the east corner of the building. Although renovations have taken place to the interior, every effort should be made to retain the original interior layout concept and materials. Regular maintenance of the interior and exterior is recommended.

The lighttower occupies almost all of the small islet on which it is built, and exemplifies the concept of a tower rooted to a rock. It is this image that should be protected, and any changes or additions to the site should respect this relationship.

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

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