

Belle Isle, Newfoundland
Belle Isle Lighthouse, Northeast

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Belle Isle lighthouse was constructed in two phases. The original, 1905, 90-foot cylindrical cast iron tower, was reinforced with concrete and six exterior supporting buttresses in 1908. The Department of Marine prepared the plans for the original cast iron tower and for the reinforced concrete sheathing. The property is owned by Transport Canada, Canadian Coast Guard. See FHBRO Building Report 88-131.

Reasons for Designation

The Belle Isle lighthouse was designated Recognized because of its functional design and its landmark value.

The Belle Isle lighthouse is one of the more unique structures in Canadian lighthouse construction because it was built during a transitional stage in the adoption of reinforced concrete in Canada. The original cast iron tower was encased with reinforced concrete and flying buttresses. The Belle Isle lighthouse is a major landfall light that has significance for its position on a major shipping lane for Transatlantic traffic.

Character-Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Belle Isle lighthouse resides in the 90-foot cast iron structure encased by a layer of cast-in-place concrete and in the well-proportioned lantern.

The flying buttresses are significant elements. Their splayed stance contributes to the remarkable silhouette of the tower and also adds stability to the structure. The six buttresses, rhythmically placed around the tower rise from the base to meet the walls of the cylindrical structure at only two levels. The exterior should be maintained so that the distinctive and pleasing form of the buttressed tower and its crisp simplified lines are retained. Regular whitewashing will protect the concrete from the harsh elements and help maintain the incisive line of this lighthouse.

The flying buttressed tower is a prominent vertical element against the barren and rocky terrain of its setting. The introduction of any new construction on the site should not mar the profile of this unique heritage lighthouse.

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