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## ***Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act: Statement of Significance***

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Cape Ray Lighthouse, Cape Ray, Newfoundland and Labrador  
1956-60 (*year of construction*)  
(Ref. 2013-LR-346, "Cape Ray Lighthouse")

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### **1 - Description of Historic Place**

The Cape Ray heritage lighthouse consists of a freestanding, reinforced-concrete, tapered octagonal tower surmounted by an aluminum and glass lantern. Situated near a small fishing village by the same name, in an isolated area on the southwest coast of Newfoundland, the lighthouse guides international and coastal shipping vessels navigating the Cabot Strait, where the Atlantic Ocean intersects with the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

There are two related building on the site that contribute to the heritage character of the lighthouse: (1) the 1990 office and (2) the 2001 fog alarm building.

### **2 - Heritage Value**

The Cape Ray Lighthouse is a heritage lighthouse because of its historical, architectural, and community values.

#### *a - Historical values*

The Cape Ray lightstation illustrates the expansion of the aids to navigation system in Canada as a response to increases in marine shipping in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. Several attempts were made to have a lighthouse constructed at this site by pre-Confederation Canada, before finally succeeding in 1871. Not only did the construction of a lighthouse at Cape Ray help guide mariners through the hazards of the Cabot Strait, it also strengthened the diplomatic relationship between Newfoundland and Canada. The original lighthouse was destroyed by fire in 1885 and its replacement subsequently damaged by fire in 1959. The current Cape Ray lighthouse, completed in 1960, reflects Canada's commitment to Newfoundland's aids to navigation program after it joined Confederation in 1949.

While the Cape Ray lightstation was built to benefit Canada's greater navigational needs, in time it also supported the small community that slowly took root at Cape Ray, especially for fishermen plying for cod, herring and salmon who used the light as they entered the harbour. Additionally, since 1856, the site of the Cape Ray heritage lighthouse has played a pivotal role in Newfoundland and Labrador telecommunications, leading to its designation by the province as a "Receiving the World Communications" site.

#### *b - Architectural values*

The Cape Ray heritage lighthouse is a very good example of a simple and practical tower design, consisting of a gracefully proportioned reinforced concrete tapered octagonal tower.

The Cape Ray heritage lighthouse is one of many examples of a common 20<sup>th</sup> century departmental design for lighthouses. Originating in 1913, the design was used frequently in the 1950s-1960s across Canada as the Department of Transport modernized its aids to navigation infrastructure. The interior layout of the

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tower is utilitarian: the single door opens into a space containing only a stairway leading to the three levels. Despite the harsh climate, the lighthouse has endured well physically, a testament to the quality of its craftsmanship, its well-understood, durable materials and its consistent maintenance.

### *c – Community values*

Situated on the southernmost tip of Newfoundland, the Cape Ray heritage lighthouse stands on the highest point of land within the lightstation and is clearly visible from the road, water and shore. Although a number of associated buildings have been removed from the site over the years, the lightstation retains its isolated and maritime character.

The Cape Ray heritage lighthouse is a staffed lighthouse and is a well-known and loved landmark for the local community. The community has repurposed the former keeper's dwelling into a museum and interpretation centre, and the large shed into a craft store, resulting in the site receiving an increasing number of visitors in recent years. The lighthouse is also a symbol of Cape Ray's history as a fishing community and its importance to marine traffic.

A Dorset Paleoeskimo archeological site was discovered on Cape Ray by local residents in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century with excavations conducted in the 1960s and 1990s. The museum in the former keeper's dwelling displays Dorset artifacts discovered.

### *d - Related buildings*

Two related buildings, as listed in section 1, contribute to the heritage character of the lighthouse.

*The character-defining elements  
related to this designation are listed  
at the end of this document.*

### **3 - Character-Defining Elements**

a - The following character-defining elements of the Cape Ray Lighthouse should be respected:

- its intact, as built structural form, height, profile, and proportions;
- its graceful, simple and aesthetically pleasing tapered octagonal tower of reinforced concrete;
- its traditional red and white exterior colour scheme;
- its unpainted, aluminum, octagonal lantern;
- the gallery's exterior open walkway and steel railing, including their respective designed forms and proportions;
- its entrance, with its dark grey door and concrete lintels protecting the opening from rainfall;
- the vertical arrangement of its three window openings, with their concrete hoods;
- the durable materials used for its construction, including poured concrete and prefabricated metal elements such as its lantern, railing, and interior stairs; and,
- its visual prominence in relationship to the water and landscape.

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b - The following character-defining elements of the related buildings should be respected:

- its built form, profile and proportions;
- its traditional red and white exterior colour scheme; and
- its contextual relationship to the lighthouse within an evolved historic lightstation setting.

Date: October 2013