

FHBRO HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT NEILS HARBOUR LIGHTHOUSE, NEILS HARBOUR, VICTORIA COUNTY, NS

FHBRO number: **01-081**
DFRP number: **n/a**
Resource name: **Neils Harbour Lighthouse**
Address: **Neils Harbour, Victoria County, Nova Scotia**
FHBRO status: **“Recognized” Federal Heritage Building**
Construction: **1899**
Designer: **Consistent with standard plan developed by Department of Marine**
Original function: **Lighthouse**
Current function: **Lighthouse with ice cream kiosk on ground floor**
Modifications: **Addition of wood deck; installation of an ice cream kiosk on the ground floor level which required the addition of interior plywood cladding, sink, counter and cupboards; new clapboard siding.**
Custodian: **Department of Fisheries and Oceans**

Description of Historic Place

The Neils Harbour Lighthouse is a simple, well-proportioned and modestly detailed, two-storey, square-tapered tower. The tower features a pedimented and protruding vestibule, cornerboards, a prominent simply detailed cornice, which supports a metal railing at the gallery level, and an octagonal metal lantern glazed on seven sides. The Neils Harbour Lighthouse is located in close proximity to the shoreline and in the heart of the combined community of Neils Harbour/New Haven, near the eastern edge of Cape Breton Highlands National Park. The designation is confined to the footprint of the building.

Heritage Value

The Neils Harbour Lighthouse is a Recognized Federal Heritage Building because of its historical associations, and its architectural and environmental values.

Historical value:

The Neils Harbour Lighthouse is associated with the national theme of aids to navigation. The light at Neils Harbour is a seasonal, coastal light marking the entrance to the harbour at Neils Harbour, a village that has been closely involved in the Atlantic fishery. The Neils Harbour Lighthouse supports the local fish processing plant, Victoria Co-op. Fisheries Limited, the only fish-processing facility listed among the dozen small coastal fishing villages within the immediate area and serving the region. Built in response to the growth of the community in the late 1800s at the end of the initial establishment phase, the Neils Harbour Lighthouse has contributed to local prosperity and is still operational. The Neils Harbour Lighthouse is also associated with Angus Buchanan, the first light keeper and an Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) for Victoria County.

Architectural value:

The Neils Harbour Lighthouse is good example of a square-tapered lighttower with a rectangular or straight cornice. Characterized by good proportions and simple details, the design of the Neils Harbour Lighthouse is consistent with the standard lighthouse plan developed by the Department of Marine and features a simple interior layout. A square-tapered tower with a wide base and low

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center of gravity, the lighthouse is a sturdy, economical structure able to withstand strong winds and waves and is constructed of solid, durable, good quality craftsmanship and materials.

Environmental value:

The Neils Harbour Lighthouse reinforces the character of the twin coastal villages of Neils Harbour and New Haven, which are situated at the edge of a shallow harbour in a marine setting. Located in the heart of the twin villages, the lighthouse is surrounded by a fairly substantial built environment consisting of a cluster of wood frame, one- and two-storey commercial and residential vernacular buildings. The Neils Harbour Lighthouse is a visual landmark in that it is an integral part of the coastal community of Neils Harbour and can be seen from the coast as well as from inland, and is also a symbolic landmark in that it serves a regional area and is a tourist attraction.

Character-Defining Elements

The following character-defining elements of the Neils Harbour Lighthouse should be respected:

Its distinctive design, standard plan and its good quality materials and craftsmanship as manifested in:

- the well-proportioned composition which consists of a two-storey square-tapered tower with a prominent rectangular or straight cornice;
- the simple detailing including the pedimented and protruding vestibule, cornerboards, and metal railing at the gallery level;
- the well-designed octagonal metal lantern which is glazed on seven sides;
- the wide, square base which creates a spacious and adaptable interior on the ground floor level;
- the simple interior layout which is well suited to its function as a lighthouse;
- the sturdy, solid construction and durable materials including the wood frame, stone foundation and clapboard siding.

The manner in which the building reinforces the character of a coastal town at the edge of a shallow harbour in a marine setting as evidenced in:

- its visual prominence from the coast and from inland owing to its location in the heart of the twin villages of Neils Harbour and New Haven, as well as its scale, massing, and materials which are in keeping with the surrounding built environment; and,
- its symbolic value to the community as a lighthouse that continues to serve the regional area and is also a tourist attraction.