

Prince Edward Island National Park  
**Dalvay-by-the-Sea Hotel**  
Prince Edward Island

## **HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

Dalvay-by-the-Sea Hotel was built as the private summer residence of Alexander MacDonald in 1896. It was used by the family until 1915, then changed hands a number of times before being converted into a summer hotel in 1932. The building was purchased by the federal government in 1937 with the establishment of Prince Edward Island National Park. A small area in the building was used as park offices from 1937 to the mid-1940s. In 1939, a kitchen extension was constructed. When the building reopened to the public in 1939, it opened as a summer hotel, with the park offices continuing to occupy a few rooms. It is still operated as a summer hotel by a concessionaire. Environment Canada is the custodial department. See FHBRO Building Report 88-34.

### **Reason for Designation**

The building was designated Classified because it is an excellent example of an opulent summer home of wealthy and prominent Americans situated in a rural setting. It is also important because of its later association with the establishment of Prince Edward Island National Park.

Dalvay-by-the-Sea is an excellent example of the Queen Anne revival style country house displaying all the characteristics of that style, both inside and out, including excellent craftsmanship and the use of local materials.

Although the site has been altered, it retains much of its original character. The house is an important landmark in the area.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage value of Dalvay-by-the-Sea resides in the entirety of its Queen Anne revival style architecture and planning, and in the quality of its environment.

Queen Anne revival style architecture and detailing is characterized in Dalvay by its steeply pitched gabled form, asymmetrical composition, its profusion of secondary elements - balconies, bay windows, grouped windows, spindlework, the contrasting texture of its surfaces, and its encircling verandah. The house employs all the elements of the style including excellent craftsmanship and the use of regional materials (in this case sandstone cobbles as the base of the verandah). The architectural elements, details, and fabric of the exterior of the building should be carefully preserved and maintained. All repairs should be carried out using matching materials and details.

Some erosion of the purity of the architecture has taken place through the addition of modern elements. During development work their removal should be considered. The fire escape

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on the north-west elevation, because of its location on a principle elevation of the building, is intrusive. The appearance of the building would benefit from its relocation if possible. The kitchen wing of 1939 is also out of character and scale with the original house. Its removal would enhance the building and, if at all possible, should be considered. No further additions should be constructed to Dalvay.

Paint colours are an important aspect of Queen Anne revival design. Investigations should be carried out prior to next painting to determine early colours.

The architecture of the interior; the planning, layout, details, finishes, and fittings, is every bit as significant as that of the exterior. This applies to the principal rooms and features of the original building. All surviving elements should be carefully preserved and protected and every effort made to reinstate missing elements. The removal of modern intrusions is encouraged.

The layout of rooms on the second and third floors has been altered by the adaptation of the original bedrooms as guest rooms - mostly by the insertion of bathrooms and closets. The guest room areas of these floors could be managed with some flexibility. Future adjustments and alterations to these areas should be carried out within the context of surviving features of the original layout - partitions, finishes, corridors and stairs. It is recommended that investigations be carried out to determine the original plan of the building and to identify these features. The stair to the second floor and the all features of the second floor stairhall should be carefully maintained.

The kitchen wing is of less concern and could be managed with some flexibility.

The long open vista created by the grassy lawns and the lake are important to both the long approach to the house and views from the house itself. These characteristics should be retained and remain free of development. Existing non-historic buildings on the property are sited and of such design and proportions that they do not seriously detract from the house. Future development should be kept to a minimum and be of such design, material and scale so as to not detract from Dalvay itself. Its siting should be carefully considered and controlled and its design consistent with the character of outbuildings; modest in scale and compatible in design. Copying of Queen Anne design or details is not recommended. Surviving elements from the historic landscape design should be identified through a landscape survey so their protection can be provided for during development and in maintenance plans.

The landscape around Dalvay is relatively flat and open. Dalvay dominates the area and the site and attracts the eye. It should continue to do so.