

FHBRO Number 91-44

Forillon Park, Quebec

St. Peter's Anglican Church

Petit-Gaspé

Construction of St. Peter's Anglican Church, located in Petit-Gaspé in Forillon National Park, began in 1864 and continued until 1885. The designer of this church is unknown. This building is under the responsibility of Parks Canada. See FHBRO Building Report 91-44.

Reasons for Designation

St. Peter's Anglican Church was designated Recognized for its role in local history, for its architectural qualities as well as for its environmental significance.

This church is testimony both to the establishment of the Anglican Church in Gaspé and to an important phase in the development of the community of Petit-Gaspé.

Built according to classical vernacular tradition, St. Peter's Anglican Church constitutes an ensemble of high aesthetic quality distinguished by the simplicity of its block with its flat apse, while the general volume of the church could be likened to that of Notre-Dame-de-Lorette Church, in the Huron village, near Québec City, apparently built in 1862. Its interior decor, which displays an ingenious alternation between light-coloured and dark-coloured boards, is particularly successful.

Despite the changes that have taken place in the associated landscape since the creation of Forillon Park, St. Peter's Church remains a gathering place for the faithful from the surrounding small communities as well as for visitors to the nature park. Religious services, both Catholic and Anglican, continue to be held in the church.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage value of St. Peter's Church resides in its simple but harmonious form, which is in keeping with the tradition of classical vernacular architecture, as well as its high-quality interior decor, which is in an excellent state of preservation.

St. Peter's Church is a small, rectangular, wood-frame building built on a stone foundation. This church is crowned by a pitched roof with upturned eaves which lend it a domestic appearance associated with Quebec vernacular architecture. However, its bell tower, set above the main entrance located on the west side, clearly indicates its religious function. Its spire surmounted by a cross incorporating a weathervane sits on

FHBRO Number 91-44

Forillon Park, Quebec

St. Peter's Anglican Church

Petit-Gaspé

a square wooden volume. These formal elements as well as the orientation of the overall plan of this church define its heritage character and should under no circumstances be altered.

The exterior decor is simple, classical and monochromatic. It is characterized by its rabbeted wooden planking painted white and by its large semi-circular windows. On the facade, the portal and the oculus located in the gable respectively illuminate an interior vestibule and the roof timbers. The most distinctive features of the interior are the division of the volume into three aisles and the way the central semi-circular vault reflects the arch of the large window of the apse.

The various materials used in the construction of the church are very sensitive to climatic changes. It is important to institute an effective maintenance program in order to ensure their longevity. The repair or replacement of elements that have deteriorated should be carried out in a manner respectful of traditional techniques and the workmanship of the existing materials. Repair of the stain-glassed windows remains the work of specialists and there should be no hesitation in retaining the services of such specialists if necessary.

While the exterior treatment is spartan, the interior decor on the other hand is quite elaborate. Skilful use has been made of the materials and contrasting colours to create typically Victorian architectural effects. The varnished wood panelling, which is characterized by alternating light and dark boards, and variations in their orientation, either diagonal, vertical or herringbone, clearly demonstrate the skill of the craftsmen of the period. The various mouldings as well as the square and chamfered columns are also made of varnished wood. The alternating colours of wood are repeated in the pews, admirably complementing the whole. Finally, the painted wood ceiling of the side aisles and vault contrasts with the varnished surfaces. The floors are made of wide wooden planks.

All these period architectural elements are in very good condition and deserve to be preserved for future generations. A simple cleaning and refinishing of the varnished or painted surfaces would extend their lifespan. The heating system and the lighting fixtures are also part of the original decor and should be preserved. If the installation of modern mechanical elements should prove necessary, care should be taken to ensure that they are incorporated discreetly, and to protect the church's exceptional framework

FHBRO Number 91-44

Forillon Park, Quebec

St. Peter's Anglican Church

Petit-Gaspé

in which extensive use was made of layers of wood in a manner reminiscent of ship's carpentry.

The vegetation surrounding the Church and the adjacent cemetery enhances this heritage ensemble. Efforts should be made to avoid introducing plantings or outdoor furniture that is inconsistent with the rural character of the site. The old tombstones merit preventive conservation measures and, if necessary, restoration.

1997.02.28

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