

## **FHBRO HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT XAVIER BLANCHETTE HOUSE, FORILLON NATIONAL PARK, QC**

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FHBRO Number: **01-66 g**  
DFRP Number: **05132**  
Resource Name: **Xavier Blanchette House**  
Address: **Forillon National Park, QC**  
FHBRO Status: **"Recognized" Federal Heritage Building**  
Construction: **1901**  
Designer: **Unknown**  
Original Function: **Residence**  
Current Function: **Open to the public for interpretation purposes**  
Custodian: **Parks Canada**

### **Reasons for Designation**

The Xavier Blanchette House has been designated a "Recognized" Federal Heritage Building because of its historical associations and its architectural and environmental values:

#### Historical value

The Xavier Blanchette House is associated with the national theme of the cod fishery in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, which was the main activity and the driving force behind the Gaspé economy for several centuries. The building was home to a family of fishermen, customers of William Hyman & Sons, and, like the other buildings in Grande-Grave, it illustrates the pivotal role played by cod exporters and merchants in the settlement of the region, and the social structure and economic dynamics that shaped traditional Gaspé fishing villages like this one.

#### Architectural value

The Xavier Blanchette House is a good example of a vernacular form that is especially common in Gaspé, where Quebec domestic architecture is influenced by the design of the Neoclassical New England house. The building's distinctive style illustrates the preservation of a tradition in domestic architecture between the mid-19th and early 20th centuries, and is typical to many of the houses in Grande-Grave. Many of the characteristic elements of this neoclassical vernacular style can be found in both the layout and the elevations of the Xavier Blanchette House, and its simple interior which is representative of vernacular rural houses, is constructed of durable, good quality materials.

#### Environmental value

The Xavier Blanchette House reinforces the present character of Grande-Grave which still evokes the former settlement, and blends with the marine landscape of Forillon owing to its design which is compatible with other buildings in Grande-Grave, and to its siting which is well-integrated with the site's topography. The relationship between the building and its landscape is relatively intact, and the configuration of the Xavier Blanchette complex is characteristic of the settlement pattern of local fishing families. The value of the house as a major landmark in the area lies in the fact that it is part of what is considered to be the most important architectural environment in Grande-Grave, the symbolic scope of which transcends regional identity.

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### **Character Defining Elements**

- Features specific to this typical form of domestic architecture, such as the stone foundation which supports the raised frame of the house and follows the topography of the site, the balanced symmetry of the elevations, the gable dormer on the addition, and the gallery that runs along part of the façade;
- The unique profile of the house which includes the main building and its two additions, which are all lined up in a row, and all feature gable roofs;
- The components that illustrate the building methods and techniques that are specific to this vernacular neoclassical tradition, in particular the use of wood as a building material, (the exterior walls are timber frame), the clapboard and vertical plank siding and contrasting exterior trim, the multi-light double-hung windows, and the interior woodwork;
- The interior layout which is representative of neoclassical houses and consists of two floors, each with four rooms around a centre hall;
- The great similarity of style, form and materials that creates the overall harmony of the buildings in Grande-Grave;
- The visual and physical link between the house and its outbuildings, the site with which it is historically associated. Its location amid fields and pastures also reflects the varied activities of fishermen-farmers; and,
- The relationship of the house to its setting which consists of a rugged coastline, as well as its relationship to the spread-out settlement of Grande-Grave.

For guidance on interventions related to this building, please refer to the *FHBRO Code of Practice*. For further information, please contact FHBRO.

March 2002