

FHBRO HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT SALTWATER POOL AND BATHHOUSE, FUNDY NATIONAL PARK, ALMA, NB

FHBRO Number: 05-079
DFRP Number: 03863
Resource Name: Saltwater Pool & Bathhouse
Address: 51 Point Wolfe Road, Alma, Fundy National Park, New Brunswick
FHBRO Status: "Recognized" Federal Heritage Building
Construction: 1950
Designer: Herbert Stanley Brown (1879 – 1959)
Original Function: Saltwater pool and bathhouse
Current Function: Saltwater pool and bathhouse
Modifications: Removal of direct access to the beach from the pool; extension of the men's dressing room into the original concession space; erection of a glass windbreak around the southern end of the pool; addition of a barrier-free access ramp; and removal of footbaths, originally adjacent to the pool.
Custodian: Parks Canada Agency

Description of Historic Place

The Bathhouse is a single storey, rectangular building faced on all four sides with rough-cut, irregularly coursed stone and topped by a medium-pitch gable roof clad in cedar shingles. An arched portico with a shed roof is attached to the poolside elevation. Small, multi-paned, deeply recessed windows are arranged in a regular rhythm, just under the eaves along the long south elevation; there are additional large double-hung, sash windows on the poolside elevation. Both gable ends contain tripartite, multi-paned windows, tucked under the eaves, while the east elevation also contains a large glazed opening. The Saltwater Pool consists of a poured concrete in-ground structure supplied with saltwater by a tide-powered pump, located parallel to the long north elevation of the Bathhouse. The designation is confined to the footprint of the building.

Heritage Value

The Saltwater Pool and Bathhouse is a "Recognized" Federal Heritage Building because of its historical associations and its architectural and environmental values.

Historical value:

As one of the first facilities constructed in the new Fundy National Park, the Saltwater Pool and Bathhouse usefully illustrates the expansion of the national parks system throughout Canada. Given its late date, it is among the last examples of the early emphasis on recreational facilities in the national parks. Swimming pools were typical of the active recreation facilities routinely provided by national parks before the first Parks Policy of 1964.

The Saltwater Pool and Bathhouse is a very good example of the development of Fundy National Park as a recreation and tourism destination. The establishment of the park marks a major turning point in the history of Alma, as tourism became the main economic generator and helped revive the declining community.

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Architectural value:

The Saltwater Pool and Bathhouse is a very late example of the Rustic Style of architecture, favoured in North American national parks since the 1880's and formally implemented in Canadian National Parks between 1902 and the 1930's. The building competently employs the Rustic Style to speak to the park's natural environment through its modest form and use of natural materials.

The functional quality of the Saltwater Pool and Bathhouse is good; the structures have fulfilled their intended functions and have been easy to maintain. The straightforward layout of the Bathhouse adequately suits the requirements for dressing rooms, washrooms and showers, while the functional design of the pool's pumping system takes advantage of the natural tidal cycles to supply it with saltwater from the Bay of Fundy.

Very good quality local materials were competently assembled in constructing the Saltwater Pool and Bathhouse. Stone construction, which is highly unusual for the area, was specifically selected for the Pool and Bathhouse to express its structural permanence.

The building is a known work of Herbert Stanley Brennen, a Saint John architect.

Environmental value:

The relationship between the Saltwater Pool and Bathhouse and its immediate site is retained and only slightly altered. The Saltwater Pool and Bathhouse is compatible within its managed park setting, which is secluded from the largely rugged natural terrain of the rest of the park, but visually exposed to the Bay of Fundy.

Due to its function as a recreational pool within Fundy National Park, the Saltwater Pool and Bathhouse are conspicuous landmarks within the park and familiar within the community of Alma and Albert County, New Brunswick.

Character-Defining Elements

The following character-defining elements of the Saltwater Pool and Bathhouse should be respected:

Historical associations related to the early emphasis on recreational facilities in the national parks, as illustrated through its use as a saltwater pool and recreational facility.

Its Rustic Style, as manifested in:

- the domestic scale of the Bathhouse, ensured through its proportions as a single storey, rectangular massed building with a gable roof;
- vernacular detailing, characterized by the multi-paned, deeply recessed sash windows, arranged in a regular rhythm;
- exterior materials and finishes, particularly the rough-cut, irregularly coursed stone, wood trim, and cedar roof shingles; and

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- interior features including the simply finished walls, wood panelling, exposed wood beams, and varnished pine ceiling with decorative supports.

The portico located along the poolside elevation, which contributes to the charm of the Saltwater Pool and Bathhouse through its shallow-arches, regularly spaced piers and stucco finish.

The good functional design, as illustrated in:

- the straightforward placement of the pool alongside the bathhouse;
- the large, rectangular plan of the Bathhouse, which is minimally subdivided to meet a very simple functional program;
- the pool's pumping system which extracts saltwater from the Bay of Fundy.

The very good quality local materials and craftsmanship, which contribute to the building's aesthetic appeal and structural longevity, as demonstrated in:

- the use of stone, which was an unusual construction material in the area;
- the rough-cut stone, well laid-up in a slightly irregular ashlar pattern;
- rustic-inspired elements of the interior; and
- the concrete in-ground pool structure.

The ongoing relationship between the Saltwater Pool and Bathhouse and its immediate site, its compatibility within the managed park-like setting and the fact that it is a familiar landmark, as provided by:

- its compatible relationship with the natural landscape;
- its aesthetic style, functional quality and durable, local materials;
- its function as a recreational pool making it known within the county;
- its unobstructed view of the Bay of Fundy.

For guidance on interventions, please refer to the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*. For further information contact FHBRO.

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