

FHBRO Number 90-31

Grosse Île, Quebec

The Marconi Station (No. 66)

The Marconi Station was built in 1919 according to plans most likely prepared by an architect from the Department of Public Works. This building is currently unoccupied. The Marconi Station is the property of Parks Canada and is part of the Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site. See FHBRO Building Report 90-31 (Part IV: 1901-1920).

Reasons for Designation

The Marconi Station was designated Recognized because of the quality of its construction and materials as well as for the environmental value of its site.

Like a colonial bungalow, the Marconi Station is a small building with a simple, light structure. Thanks to its solid workmanship and judicious choice of finishing materials, this former wireless station has a pleasing appearance.

The Marconi Station is located in the centre of the village, on a moderately wooded site which offers an exceptional view of the St. Lawrence River. Although several buildings from the period were demolished to make way for the animal quarantine, the Marconi Station, together with the Physician's Residence and the School, ensures the historical continuity of this sector of the island.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Marconi Station resides in the simplicity of its model, in its materials and in its construction details inspired by vernacular architecture, and in its unusual interior layout. Its relationship with the other historical buildings located in the village is also a contributing factor.

The Marconi Station is a small, wooden single-storey rectangular building with a gently sloping pitched roof. A small raised, open porch leads to the front door. Its small gable roof is supported by square columns and pilasters, adding a touch of elegance. It is recommended that these original formal characteristics be left undisturbed. The restoration of damaged or missing elements - stairs, balustrade, columns and pilasters - should be based on the existing elements or on reliable iconographic documents.

The exterior cladding of the Marconi Station consists of simple, rabbeted wooden planking laid horizontally. The arrangement of the openings is relatively symmetrical.

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The facade has one window located on each side of the front door. The side elevations have a single window, while the rear has three. A door leading to the basement is located on the east side and a small semicircular opening provides light for the attic on the west side. It should be noted that the wooden sash windows are framed by small, decorative outside shutters made of loose boards and that the front door is panelled, with small panes. Regular maintenance of all these wooden components that define the architectural character of the building is essential. It is recommended that any replacement elements be similar to the originals in all respects. This also applies to the brick chimney, which it would be worthwhile to restore based on the existing model. Since wooden shingles, the original roofing material, were representative of the craftsmanship of the early twentieth century, consideration could be given to restoring the roof using this material.

On the inside, the space is divided between two distinct areas: the work area, which consists of a large telegraphy room; and the other section, which includes the former generator room and a washroom. A small hall serves as a buffer zone between the two areas. It would be appropriate to respect this spatial organization, which gives the building its meaning.

This differentiation of the interior spaces is evident in the choice of finishing materials. The walls and ceiling of the work room are covered with small varnished boards, as are the interior panel doors, while the windows are painted white. In the other area, the walls are simply plastered and the wall surfaces are embellished with wooden strips painted a contrasting colour. The original door and window hardware has survived in several locations. It is also interesting to observe some of the furniture and fixtures of the period which refer to the former communication functions.

Generally, the choice of colours for the finishing materials, both interior and exterior, should be based on historical research and on stratigraphic analyses. It would also be desirable to preserve any surviving original door and window hardware, as well as all the furniture and fixtures associated with the building's original functions.

The Marconi Station is the only evidence of the "communication" function of Grosse Île. It is therefore strongly recommended that all traces on the ground that may attest to the primary role of the building be preserved. It would also be preferable that any enhancement work at Grosse Île respect the relationships between the historical buildings.

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

Translation