

FEDERAL HERITAGE BUILDING REVIEW OFFICE (FHBRO)
HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

FHBRO Number:	90-31 (Part IV: 1901-1920)
DFRP Number:	56522
Resource Name:	Public Works Officer's House (Building 43)
Address:	Grosse-Île, Québec
Construction:	1912
Original Function:	Mixed: residence and office
Current Function:	—
Custodian:	Parks Canada
FHBRO Status:	Recognized Federal Heritage Building

Reasons for Designation

The Public Works Officer's house has been designated as a "Recognized" building primarily for its architectural qualities and environmental significance.

Historical Value

In the early 20th century, Canada's economic boom sparked a wave of immigration unprecedented in this country; the influx of immigrants put huge pressure on the human quarantine station on Grosse-Île. The historical value of the Public Works Officer's house resides in its affiliation with the group of buildings erected in the early decades of the 20th century to accommodate the growing number of patients held on the island, and the fact that the house served as both residence and workplace for a government officer who was likely involved in that building campaign. The house is part of the Grosse-Île and Irish Memorial National Historic Site of Canada.

Architectural Value

The architectural value of the Public Works Officer's house lies in its esthetic and functional design, the building materials and the construction. This is one of the most unique buildings on Grosse-Île. While it looks like a small seaside villa from the early 20th century, it actually consists of two buildings connected by a covered walkway. The Mansard or "French" roof on the main building reflects a time when that type of roof experienced a wave of popularity in North America. In addition, the façade of the main section of the building (the house and office per se) has fine decorative details indicating a luxury rarely found in the other houses on Grosse-Île.

Environmental Value

The environmental value of the Public Works Officer's house resides in its historic relationship with the immediate surrounding landscape, which remains relatively intact. It also stems from the fact that the house, along with the Anglican chapel located nearby,

strongly defines the current-day character of this portion of the island.

Character-Defining Elements

- The unusual massing of this wooden house, which consists of three volumes joined together and featuring a variety of shapes and roof profiles. The first building is a one-storey residence with Mansard roof, while the second is a simple shed with a gable roof; a covered passageway connects these two volumes.
- The access system, which was directly related to the sloping site, particularly the secondary entrance at mid-level, a rather unusual solution for the time.
- The quality of the detailing at the main entrance (river side), which indicates a luxury rarely found in Grosse-Île houses. This refinement extends to the steps and the covered verandah (turned posts, gingerbread along the eave and down the steps) and double-leaf entry doors.
- The plain architectural treatment of the rest of the building.
- The elements illustrating the finishing styles and techniques specific to residential architecture in the early 20th century, in particular the inside staircase that matches the outside staircase and the meticulously crafted cove ceilings in the living room and dining room.
- Evidences that this house was occupied by the Public Works Officer, such as the etched glass in the double entry door bearing the monogram of the Department of Public Works (DPW).
- The historic relationship of the house with its immediate setting, a sharp cliff overlooking the river, a unique sitting that offered a truly spectacular view to its occupants.
- The relationship between the Public Works Officer's residence and the Anglican chapel; these two buildings are at the core of the current-day character of this portion of the island.

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

Prepared in February 2002

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