

FHBRO Number 90-31

Grosse Île, Quebec

The School (No. 71)

The Grosse Île School dates from 1909. Its plans were probably prepared by an architect from the Department of Public Works. This School continued to be used as such even after the quarantine facility was closed, since classes were still being taught there even in the 1950s. It is the property of Agriculture Canada and is part of the Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site. See FHBRO Building Report 90-31 (Part IV: 1901-1 920).

Reasons for Designation

The Grosse Île School was designated Recognized for its architectural design and for its central role in the village environment.

Functional rather than aesthetic considerations mark the design of this school. Indeed, it could easily be confused with a private home if it were not for its large dimensions, which enabled it to accommodate about fifty students. The classroom was positioned according to the rule which stated that light should enter from the left side.

The school is located at the eastern end of the central sector of Grosse Île. Its presence remains essential for understanding the organization of the village.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage value of the School derives from its form, its decorative elements inspired by vernacular architecture and its location at the eastern end of the central sector of the village.

The Grosse Île School is a small, one-and-a-half storey, wooden building with a pitched roof. With its casement window dormers and wooden shingle cladding, it looks more like a rural home than an educational institution. Indeed, this school has neither the fenestration nor the bell turret typically found in schools of this kind. Its almost square plan and its dimensions (10.66 x 12.9 metres), which are larger than those of a private home, however, suggest a special function.

The architectural scheme of this school is governed by functional rather than aesthetic considerations. For instance, the main door is located on the right and the position of the windows is dictated by the needs of the rooms, and not by the rules of symmetry. The extension and the small vestibule adjoining the rear wall are typical of vernacular

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architecture, which functions by addition. It is recommended that these formal characteristics, which define the heritage value of the School, be preserved. The decision whether or not to maintain the additions on the back (vestibule and portico located at the rear) should depend on the current program and their compatibility with the built environment.

The spatial organization of the ground floor reflects the original plan fairly closely. On the right is the entrance hall and the teacher's quarters, which formerly consisted of two adjoining rooms. The former classroom, which still occupies two-thirds of the floor area, was located on the left so as to receive light from the proper side. Later, the second storey was converted into three rooms and a bathroom. The extension, which is accessible from the main room, housed the students' washrooms. A use compatible with the original plans still remains desirable.

It is obvious that the School's interior finishing dates to two separate time periods. The plaster finishing of the rooms located on the ground floor appears to be recent. The windows are sash windows and the doors are composed of five horizontal panels. The modern materials may have been applied over the original finishes, in which case, consideration could be given to an operation for the careful removal of these materials in order to determine the original appearance.

The walls and ceilings of the second storey and the extension are covered with small wooden boards and the doors have four vertical panels. These finishing elements are typical of turn-of-the-century vernacular architecture and merit preservation. Any modern lighting and heating elements should harmonize with the existing decor.

It would be desirable to leave the former access roads to the building undisturbed and to restore the appearance of the site to one more consistent with its original status.

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

Translation
