

FHBRO HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT AUBREY ISLAND PICNIC SHELTER, ST. LAWRENCE ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK

FHBRO number: **93-33**
DFRP number: **09431**
Resource name: **Aubrey Island Picnic Shelter**
Address: **Aubrey Island, St. Lawrence Islands National Park, Ontario**
FHBRO status: **“Recognized” Federal Heritage Building**
Construction: **1935**
Designer: **Architectural Division, National Parks Branch, under the direction of W.D. Cromarty**
Original function: **picnic shelter**
Current function: **picnic shelter**
Modifications: **cedar roof shingles replaced with asphalt shingles**
Custodian: **Parks Canada Agency (PCA)**

Reasons for Designation

The Aubrey Island Picnic Shelter is a “Recognized” Federal Heritage Building because of its historical associations, and its architectural and environmental values:

Historical value:

The Aubrey Island Picnic Shelter is associated with the increase number of national park visitors in Canada during the interwar years. Aubrey Island was one of 12 islands set aside by the federal government for park purposes in 1904, in response to increasing public demands for recreational space. The area was established as St. Lawrence Islands National Park (SLINP) in 1914. Visitors to SLINP grew slowly until the 1930s when pleasure driving and pleasure boating became accessible to wider number of Canadians and Americans in spite of the hardships of the Depression. In 1935 park authorities decided the time was right to invest in additional park facilities, including the Aubrey Island Picnic Shelter.

Architectural value:

The Aubrey Island Picnic Shelter is a good example of the rustic aesthetic developed in the 1920s and 1930s by W.D. Cromarty, Head of the Architectural and Planning Division, National Parks Service, for use in Canada’s national parks. The Adelaide Island Picnic Shelter demonstrates Cromarty’s use of milled-wood frame construction as a practical and cheaper alternative to log construction. The simple, open design is appropriate to its use as a public picnic shelter, permitting a view of the surrounding scenery while providing protection from sun and inclement weather. The unpartitioned interior space allows for flexible use. Standard components found in the Aubrey Island Picnic Shelter include: a hipped roof with exposed rafter ends, vertical wood support posts with wood brackets, a low surrounding railing comprised of crossed timbers, and a concrete slab foundation.

Environmental value:

The Aubrey Island Picnic Shelter is the only structure, with the exception of a privy, on a remote, heavily treed site on an island in the St. Lawrence River. The rustic aesthetic of the shelter is appropriate to this setting. The

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shelter is conveniently located close to a dock, and is well-known and well-frequented.

Character-Defining Elements

The following character-defining elements of the Aubrey Island Picnic Shelter should be respected:

Its role as an illustration of the increasing use of national parks for tourism during the interwar years is reflected in:

- its simple, functional design, in keeping with its long-standing use as a public picnic shelter. Its

rustic aesthetic and conformity to the standard design for national park picnic shelters, as manifested in:

- the open design and unpartitioned interior space;
- the hipped roof, exposed rafters, vertical wood support posts, wood brackets, and concrete slab floor;
- the low surrounding railing comprised of crossed timbers;
- the use of milled-wood frame construction and roughly finished wood components. The

manner in which it reinforces the rustic, yet accessible character of the setting as evidenced in:

- its remote location on a heavily treed island site, with a privy and dock nearby.

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

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