

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The DeLaurier House in Point Pelee National Park was originally constructed between 1851 and 1861 by Oliver DeLaurier. It was modified for use by two families in the early 1900s, and in the early 1950s, a small greenhouse was attached to the west wall. The house was occupied by the DeLaurier family until 1966. It is currently used as an interpretive centre for the Point Pelee National Park and is the property of the Parks Canada. See FHBRO Report 89-1 74.

Reasons for Designation

The DeLaurier house was designated Recognized because of its historical associations and architectural significance, and for its relationship to its environment.

The house is the only surviving 19th century structure and therefore the oldest in the park. Together with its barn, it illustrates the life and times of a small French Canadian community outside Quebec and the agricultural activity on Point Pelee between 1850 and 1966. Indeed, it is the single most important historic resource for illustrating the early settlement history of the Point Pelee area.

Associated with its builder, Oliver DeLaurier, and with his descendants, the house was variously used as a neighborhood tavern, for local parties and for community dances. Architecturally unassuming, the building reflects the owners' resourcefulness in the various alterations and improvements visible within.

The reclamation of marshland led to Point Pelee becoming one of Canada's finest agricultural areas in the latter half of the 19th century. The house and nearby barn are important as the only surviving examples of the agricultural and domestic activity of early Point Pelee.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the DeLaurier House resides in its form, construction materials, fenestration and detailing, evolutionary development and surviving interior layout, and in the character of its setting within the National Park.

The DeLaurier House is a two-storey gabled building with simple massing. The original configuration of two separate log houses with their intermediate space (originally a breezeway) continues to be expressed on the exterior, as there are two roof pitches evident. The wood clad greenhouse, a later addition, is well integrated with the house.

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avoided. Similarly, the ad hoc, informal nature of window and door placement should be respected as an expression of the buildings physical history.

The interior also illustrates the building's evolutionary nature, having undergone substantial alterations. It was modified for use by two families in the early 1900s with the installation of a kitchen and dining room to the east side of the house, the removal of the northern fireplace and the alteration of staircases and living areas. The interior has since been renovated to accommodate interpretive programs. Any further interior modifications should be preceded by investigation and documentation of the early configuration and finishes.

The house is located along the western edge of the marsh lands of the sandspit, and is approached along a boardwalk. The landscaped setting has been modified to accommodate the current use of the property. However, it retains the basic features of its rural past. Every effort should be made to maintain the existing relationship between the house, the barn and the grounds.

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