

Bonavista, Newfoundland
Ryan Fish Store (Building No. 3)
Rvan Premises

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Fish Store (Building No. 3 of the Ryan Premises) was built circa 1888-1890 for the Ryan family fishery. The family run company has been closed since 1978. The building is in the care of Parks Canada because the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada has designated the Ryan Premises for potential development to commemorate the Atlantic fishery. See FHBRO Building Report 92-83.

Reasons For Designation

The Ryan Fish Store building was designated Recognized for its strong association with an important historical theme, for the craftsmanship and materials used in its construction, and for the important role it plays in the character of the complex.

The Ryan Fish Store is one of six buildings that constitute the "Ryan Premises", which comprised the headquarters of a family operated inshore fishery. The Ryan Company made an important contribution to Newfoundland and Canadian history, and is representative of various aspects of the Atlantic fishery. As an architectural ensemble, the Ryan Premises forms a coherent whole that is highly evocative of the 19th and 20th century Atlantic fishery.

The Fish Store shares aesthetic qualities with the other Ryan Premises buildings, whose severe, unadorned angular qualities exemplify Newfoundland vernacular architecture. The basic rectangular massing and regular fenestration establish the visual character of this building and the complex.

Ryan Premises is a significant complex of buildings grouped on a gently sloping site by the sea. The recognized designation applies to the entire building, and to its site relationships with other buildings in the Ryan Premises and with the sea.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Ryan Fish Store resides in its massing, proportions, architectural details and materials.

The Fish Store building is a three-and-a-half storey wood frame building on a stone and concrete foundation. It is a simple rectangular box-like form capped with a side-gable roof. The overall form and footprint of the building should be respected.

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The pattern of window and door openings is integral to the building's character. Facade openings on the north (sea) elevation are symmetrical about a central axis, with regularly spaced window openings on all floors. There are only two openings on the south (street) elevation. Large openings in all the elevations provided loading access on the ground floor and upper floors. Evidence exists of outside staircases to openings at the upper levels. Early windows and doors should be retained and restored.

The clapboard walls are outlined by finely proportioned trim, and by the slight eave overhang and the narrow fascia which reads as a sharp line. Care should be taken to maintain the existing wood finishes. All elements should be repaired rather than replaced, and painted in traditional colours identified by paint analysis.

The building's stark linear geometry and understated ornamentation complement the surrounding uncompromising landscape. The features which create this quality should be maintained; alterations which would soften or embellish the architecture should be resisted.

The structure is solid heavy timber post and beam construction with round-cut wood studs at approximately two foot centres sheathed with straight edged lumber, and finished with narrow spruce clapboard. The integrity of the structural system should be respected. The masonry and concrete foundations should be regularly inspected and maintained by qualified contractors.

The Fish Store building was used for the storage of coal on the ground floor and fish on the floors above. Unlike other buildings in Ryan Premises, it had no public function. The simple, rough finishes of the interior, with whitewash in some areas, clearly indicate its utilitarian storage function; this character should be respected.

Unlike the other buildings in the Ryan Premises, this building retains its historic orientation to the sea. Site development should respect this relationship, and preserve the utilitarian character of the setting.

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