

## **HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

### **Ryan Residence (Building No. 5)**

Ryan Premises

Bonavista, Newfoundland

The Ryan Residence (Building No. 5 of the Ryan Premises) was built circa 1860 for the Ryan family by local carpenters. The family-run company has been closed since 1978 and the buildings abandoned. The complex is in the care of Parks Canada because the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada has designated the Ryan Premises for potential development as a commemorative site representing the Atlantic fishery. See FHBRO Building Report 92-83.

### **Reasons for Designation**

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

The Ryan Residence is one of six buildings that constitute the "Ryan Premises", 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. The Ryan premises forms a coherent whole that is highly evocative of the business of the 19th and 20th century Atlantic fishery.

The Ryan Residence and the other buildings of the Ryan Premises are simple wooden structures whose severe, unadorned angular qualities exemplify Newfoundland vernacular architecture. Their basic rectangular massing, rigid symmetry and regular fenestration establish the visual character of the complex. The Residence has Victorian elements that embellish the severe wooden structure and set it apart from the more utilitarian company buildings.

Ryan Premises is a significant complex of buildings grouped on a gently sloping site by the sea. The Classified 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 Residence resides in its massing, proportions, architectural details and materials, and site relationships.

A two-and-a-half storey wood frame building on a stone and concrete foundation, the Ryan Residence is a simple box-like form with a front porch and a one-story, shed roofed extension (linhay) at the back. The vaulted brick cellar in the linhay is unusual and an example of fine craftsmanship.

The disposition of multi-paned windows reflects the interior layout and contributes to the balanced composition of the elevations. The patterns and early fabric of these features should be retained. The windows should be restored.

The clapboard walls are outlined by finely proportioned trim, and by the slight eaves overhang and the narrow fascia which read as a sharp line. Ornamentation adds a Victorian flavour to the otherwise severe architecture in such stylistic elements such as the gingerbread bargeboards and front porch columns. Care should be taken to maintain the existing wood finishes. All elements should be repaired rather than replaced, and painted in traditional colours based on paint analysis.

The interior layout of the residence is a classically inspired center-hall plan. Symmetrically placed working fireplaces which heated each room are important features that should be retained. Interior spaces are intact, and the finishes are superb examples of Newfoundland vernacular style and craftsmanship. The wood trim at doors, windows, baseboards, fireplace mantels and under-window panelling exhibits sound construction and sophisticated detailing. Board walls and ceilings have been carefully crafted to resemble smooth plaster complete with such decorative elements as ceiling roundels. The residence featured some built-in furniture such as the glass-fronted cupboard with Chippendale-style mullions. All surviving early elements should be retained and restored.

In its environs the residence plays a strong supporting role; it marks the place of the family in a large family run business that significantly influenced the surrounding community. The features which create this quality should be maintained.

According to oral history and historic photographs, the house was originally fronted by a carefully landscaped garden looking out to the sea. Consideration should be given to reinstating the garden with its elaborate fence constructed on a stone base with gateway and lantern, based on documentary, pictorial and physical evidence. The relationship of the buildings to the sea is significant and should be protected.

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

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