

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

SUMMARY

The Superintendent's House was built in 1896 by J. and R. Miller, contractors from Ingersoll, Ontario to designs prepared by the Department of Railways and Canals signed by J.B. Spence, Chief Draftsman. It was Recognized because of its good design, its very good craftsmanship and its reinforcing influence on the present character of the area.

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

Since the days of the fur trade, Canada's transportation system has operated on an east-west axis. The St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes provided Canada's original "highway" stretching from the Atlantic into the heart of the continent. Later, canals and railroads were built to improve communication and travel but the basic east-west axis was maintained. The development of the transportation network across the country is one of the dominant themes of Canadian history. Construction of the Sault Ste. Marie Canal did not begin until 1889. The first ship passed through the locks at the Sault in September 1895, and most of the canal buildings were completed by 1896.

The complex of buildings illustrates the crucial years when Sault Ste. Marie was transformed from a small community into a modern industrial centre.

ARCHITECTURE

The superintendent's House is a one-and-a-half cross gable roofed structure of red sandstone quarried from the canal during its construction. The building appears to have a small wooden addition, but the original plans indicate that both portions of the building were constructed at the same time. The house originally had a large verandah located across the south facade but this has been removed. The quoins, window and door surrounds are limestone from Picton, Ontario. The gable ends of the building feature bargeboard trim of a type produced in factories and widely distributed in the 1890s. The design of the Superintendent's House is inspired by the Gothic Revival Style although by 1896, the year of construction, this style's popularity was on the wane. The massing, design and interior arrangement of the Superintendent's House reflects the important social position of the Superintendent in Sault Ste. Marie society.

ENVIRONMENT

The integrity of the relationship between the complex of buildings at the Sault Ste. Marie Canal and its associated landscape has remained virtually unchanged since the

buildings were constructed. Located on St. Mary's Island, which the canal bisects, they are set apart from the town of Sault Ste. Marie. The present use of the Sault Ste. Marie Canal for recreational purposes contributes to the character of the shore line across the bay, just as its former use as a busy commercial canal complimented use of the shore as a centre of transportation.

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