

FHBRO Number 90-12
La Mauricie National Park
Wabenaki Lodge
Lac à la Pêche, Quebec

The year in which the Wabenaki Lodge was built remains to be determined precisely, but some indicators suggest that it was between 1886 and 1914. Oral tradition attributes its construction to the Gendron and Garceau families of Saint-Élie. The lodge originally served as the kitchen and the members' dining room. It remained the property of the Laurentian Club until 1952, and was then owned by the Wabenaki Fish and Game Club until it was expropriated by the Quebec government in 1972. In 1977, the expropriated land and buildings became the property of the federal government, when La Mauricie National Park was created. Parks Canada is currently responsible for the building. See FHBRO Building Report 90-12.

Reasons for Designation

Wabenaki Lodge was designated Recognized for its charming setting and the quality of its workmanship and materials. It is also associated with the history of recreational fishing and hunting which, along with logging, have been the cornerstone of the economic development of the Trois-Rivières region for nearly 90 years.

Wabenaki Lodge is a recreational building which is in keeping with the aesthetic vision of Edward Maxwell, a renowned architect of the early 1900s. Like the logging camps and a number of buildings of private hunting and fishing clubs, the lodge was built of logs, a local material which harmonized with the site.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage value of Wabenaki Lodge resides in its integration with the site, the composition in contrasting materials of its main block and the unusual type of log joints used.

The asymmetrical plan of the lodge consists of two main sections forming a "T" and includes a basement and two habitable storeys. The hipped roof with upturned eaves has six overhanging hip dormers and a brick chimney. A verandah is attached to the northeastern facade of the rear section of the building and provides access to the main door. The form and appearance of the lodge have changed little since it was originally built and their characteristics will have to be respected during any future work.

The use of contrasting materials, i.e. field stone for the foundations, logs for the main

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block and shingles for the upper storey, is characteristic of the work of Edward Maxwell (or one of his disciples) and this combination will have to be carefully preserved. For the log construction, dovetail joints were used in the corners rather than saddle notched corners, which is unusual. The logs, moreover, are in very good condition because of good ground clearance.

There have been several changes to the roof: the original shingles were replaced by sheet metal and then by a green, galvanized steel standing seam roof. However, the shape of the roof has not changed. When the roof is redone, it would be recommended to use wooden shingles again, which harmonize better with the original exterior cladding.

The interior, the plan of which has changed since 1973, is distinguished mainly by its exposed hewn beams on the ground floor - another Maxwell characteristic - and by its quarry stone fireplace decorated with a band course forming the mantelpiece and a surbased arch in the common room. These two elements must be preserved since they are the main survivors of the original rustic interior architecture. There is another striking feature of the initial plan: it was the dining room and not the verandah that overlooked the lake, which seems to confirm that these clubs were places of action rather than contemplative retreats. The room has since been subdivided and is now used as a bedroom and common room. This change reflects the current use of the building. However, it would be desirable to restore the common room's view of the lake, which is currently obstructed by an enclosed bedroom at the eastern end of the common room.

Although the disappearance of several buildings detracts from the immediate area surrounding Wabenaki Lodge, the current natural setting should be preserved. Any outside work will have to respect the existing environment and appearance of the building as well as maintaining the views of the lake.

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

Translation
