

Landmarks

Grand Marais's Significant Heritage Buildings

The Grand Marais Special Places project was inaugurated in 2010-11, with the first major component being a comprehensive and detailed inventory of 152 buildings and sites. Through rigorous analysis and assessment processes suggested to us by the province's Historic Resources Branch, we have identified a handful of buildings that most effectively define and illustrate key aspects of our history and heritage. The following list of buildings and sites constitutes the Grand Marais Heritage Group's recommendations and reminders to the community about those places that have major claims for heritage significance.

- Old St. Jude's Anglican Church
- Watt Cottage, 36 Hillbrow
- Doyle Cottage, 27 Oak
- Stewart Cottage, 275 Grand Marais
- English Cottage, 52 Hillbrow
- Kurtz Cottage, 77 Grand Marais
- Log Cabin, 58 Hillbrow
- Ashgrove Cottage, 31 Central
- Johnson Cottage, 28 Cameron

- Bremont Cottage, 13 Thorncliffe
- Lanky's Hot Dog Stand



Archival image of an old Grand Marais cabin.

As noted, the development of this short list of significant sites was the result of careful and studied deliberations using standard heritage evaluation criteria, processes and scoring regimes. This work was carried out by the Grand Marais Heritage Group with assistance from staff of the Historic Resources Branch of Manitoba Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection. We are grateful to the branch for their generous support and patient attention in this particular endeavour.

As a collection, these 11 buildings define many aspects and themes from Grand Marais's past, and do so through places that are at once significant, but also interesting and attractive. Many of the selections are cabins/cottages, the most resonant of our remaining building stock. These, and a few other public/commercial buildings, are places that the people of Grand Marais can look to with pride. These buildings remind us of past glories, but also suggest an enduring sense of community, and are a beacon for its future.

These buildings are presented on following pages with an accompanying Heritage Value Statement that elucidates each building's key heritage attributes.

Old St. Jude's Anglican Church



Built in 1906, and thus eight years before the summer-time community of Grand Marais was established in 1914, St. Jude's Anglican Church is the oldest remaining building in the village, and also the strongest connection to the original Métis community that settled here. The church is of log construction, but that pioneer building technology is disguised by a sophisticated Gothic Revival form, a crenellated tower that rises from the front porch. The church is surrounded by a cemetery that contains the gravesites of many of Grand Marais's earliest inhabitants.

Watt Cottage



Watt Cottage has been a landmark in the community since its construction in the 1920s. The site of the local magistrate's office for many years, the cottage is also a strong physical presence. Facing onto Parkview and set into a hillock, the cottage is strikingly placed on a tall stone foundation. The large building has many exterior qualities from its earliest days, as well as many features and fixtures inside as well, including a large stone fireplace, wooden floors and ceiling, and many intact windows.

Doyle Cottage



Built in the 1920s, and thus quite old for Grand Marais, the Doyle Cottage is one the best local examples of the kind of traditional cottage form that can be found in many other Manitoba summer communities. With its shallow pyramidal roof and wide verandah, the form is of a type. Inside, the original log construction is apparent in the exposed beams and rafters. The whole cottage, inside and out, has exceptionally high integrity, with siding, floor and wall materials and stone fireplace all still intact, lovingly preserved for nearly 100 years.

Stewart Cottage



The Stewart Cottage, from 1928, is a well known site on the south stretch of Grand Marais Boulevard. With its exquisite and impressive stone fence and fanciful cottage rising at the top edge of a sloped yard, the site is a notable one. The cottage itself is important, a good example of the kind that defines Grand Marais cottage designs. The fact that the building has high integrity, with materials, features and fixtures surviving from the 1920s, is remarkable. And of course the fence is perhaps the best known of its type in the community, which prides itself on the legacy of its stone fences and front steps.

English Cottage



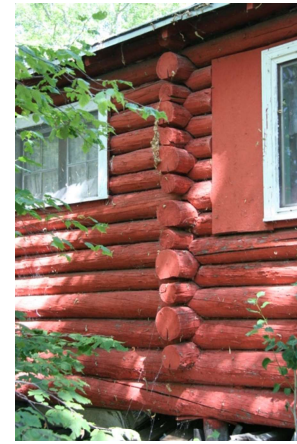
The English Cottage, built in 1922 and thus one of the oldest surviving summer residences in Grand Marais, is an excellent intact example of the kind of cottages built here at that time. With its simple basic form, shallow gabled roof and modest main face, the cabin says all it needs to say about the typical Grand Marais cottage – unpretentious, comfortable and sunny, given the many large windows that open into the main rooms. The high level of integrity, a tribute to owners over the years who have preserved so much, is also important. One of the key features of the cottage is the fine stone steps – a characteristic of many Grand Marais cottages, where the abundant stones have been used by so many for foundations and fences and intricate front steps.

Kurtz Cottage



The Kurtz Cottage is a major Grand Marais landmark, standing on Grand Beach Road and overlooking Lake Winnipeg. Built in the 1920s, this is the largest and most ambitious of the several distinctive log cottages and cabins that still stand in the community. With its grand size, distinctive form and of course impressive saddle-notch log construction, the building is an architectural wonder. Amongst its other attributes are a beautiful stone chimney and an interior whose high levels of integrity, still boasting original room configurations, finishes and details, is a major tribute to various owners over the years.

Log Cabin



The Log Cabin is the best of a few remaining Grand Marais examples of a distinctive kind of cabin. Of log construction, with impressive saddle-notch joints and interesting detail work, there are several of these unusual buildings in the community – but none of the size or situation of the Log Cabin. Built in the 1930s, the cabin actually consists of two buildings formed into one. Set into a grouping of huge boulders, the cabin also seems to have grown from the landscape, or at least to have been there for eons. Recalling the rustic sensibilities of the earliest Grand Marais settlers and even of the first summer residents, this is one of Grand Marais's architectural gems.

Ashgrove Cottage



Ashgrove Cottage is one of the best remaining sites recalling how Grand Marais cottage owners often developed small complexes of buildings for rental purposes. A fine main cottage, from 1922, itself an important building, dominates the yard. Behind it are several outbuildings that were once used by visitors. One of these still reveals the modest and distinctive wooden pole construction that was used in its construction. Throughout all of the buildings are excellent intact examples of the kind of hand-made, ingenious features and details that define the cottage character of so many Grand Marais cottages and cabins – summery, whimsical and durable.

Johnson Cottage



Built in the 1940s, and thus of a slightly later generation than the first Grand Marais cottages of the 1920s, the Johnson Cottage is a wonderfully intact reminder of the kind of hand-made design and construction practices that have defined the community's architectural identity for so many years. The cottage is small, distinctive, light-hearted and whimsical, in many of its forms, features and details. And even today, recent additions and renovations have all been undertaken with that kind of delightful free spirit.

Bremont Cottage



Called “Bremont,” the Whyte-Gibson Cottage, whose first summer dwelling was built around 1928, is an excellent example of the type of modest, informal cottages that defined Grand Marais in its early years. The hand-made quality of the original cottage is eloquently expressed in various surviving features and details, like the overall rustic form, the rubblestone chimney, wooden window frames with shutters, and original door. Inside, the cottage retains much of its original physical integrity. Additionally, an older shed with large vertically-operated shutters and even the original wire fence are still present on the site. While the cottage has been added on over the years, new additions have been sympathetic to the original building, and the whole site, heavily treed and private, is redolent of Grand Marais’s quiet, informal sensibility.

Lanky's Hot Dog Stand



Lanky's Hot Dog Stand—"Home of the Foot Long"—is the last remaining site along Grand Beach Road that recalls the line of commercial establishments that once dominated this strip – serving fast foods and entertainments, but also groceries and other necessities. Lanky's still expresses that summer-time resort atmosphere, with a frankly insubstantial building with informal, hand-made features, whose gaudy colours are at once jazzy, fun and light-hearted.