
FHBRO Number 96-25

Banff NP, Alberta

Cuthead Warden Cabin

Banff National Park

The Cuthead Warden Cabin at Banff National Park was constructed in 1931 to an earlier design by James T. Childe, Dominion Parks engineer in Banff. Built to provide overnight shelter for wardens on extended patrols, and also available for public use when unoccupied, this one-storey cabin comprises a rectangular room and verandah. The cabin maintains its original use and is little altered. Parks Canada is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Docket 96-25.

Reasons For Designation

The Cuthead Warden Cabin was designated Recognized for its environmental significance, its architectural importance, and its historical associations.

The Warden Cabin is strategically located within Banff National Park for backcountry travel between several other warden cabin destinations positioned at intervals along the Cascade Fire Road, now a hiking trail. With its adjacent equipment shed and round rail horse corral, it is an important and distinctive local landmark within an otherwise sparsely populated locality. Built of locally gathered materials, the cabin is particularly significant, sitting within the landscape in a small open glade surrounded by dense spruce forest. By its overall form, scale, round-log construction and finishes, the Cabin integrates harmoniously into the park's wilderness character.

Small, simple and rectangular in form and characterised by its unadorned paint-finished round-log construction, the Warden's Cabin is a fine early example of a standard Number 3-type rustic design one-room overnight patrol cabin. This type, designed in 1918 and built thereafter, with minor variations, through to the 1960s, reflects the aesthetics favoured by national parks in the west during the early to mid 20th century.

Historically, the cabin is significant for its association with the National Parks Service and its mounted staff, and with the development of the western mountain national parks.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Cuthead Warden Cabin resides in its site relationships, overall form, scale, rustic design, round-log construction, details, materials and interior. Contextually, the original setting remains intact. The Cabin, with its shed and corral, conserves its layout and rustic design character. Any future developments or landscape alterations should respect and maintain its integrated visual and physical

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relationships with the surrounding spruce forest and the glade area. The round log construction of the cabin, shed and corral contributes significantly to the site as a whole.

With its simple rectangular plan and massing, cedar shingle-finished low pitched roof and gable ends, the Cuthead Warden Cabin is characterised by its rustic round-log wood construction and red-brown external paint finish with white painted windows and trim. The high standard of workmanship should be matched in any future works. Feature elements, details and finishes should be respected and maintained. These include: the entrance gable elevation with the entrance door to one side, counterbalanced by a small 6-light window; the painted wood cabin sign centred prominently in the upper entrance gable area; the saddle-notched and trimmed logs at the corners; and the finial detail at the apex of the entrance gable roof. Chinking between logs should be maintained and repaired to match original detailing and materials.

The Cabin's six-light windows with muntin bars, and the wood plank door should be maintained. If replaced, new elements should match originals in design, materials, finishes and operation.

Internally the Cabin retains its original function and volume. The exposed paint-finished round log framing and walls, ceiling, milled plank flooring, wood trim and stove should all be respected and maintained. New components should match originals in dimension, materials, tooling, fixings, workmanship and finishes, and should be consistent with the simple rustic design character of the cabin.

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