

FHBRO Number 93-107

Banff NP, Alberta

Divide Warden Cabin

Banff National Park

The Divide Warden Cabin at the Banff National Park was constructed in 1922 to a 1918 design by James T. Childe, Dominion Parks engineer in Banff. Built to provide overnight shelter for wardens on extended patrols, this one-storey cabin comprises a rectangular room and verandah. The cabin is little altered though is now used as a storage building since a new log cabin was built adjacent in c.1982 to 1983. Parks Canada is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 93-1 07.

Reasons For Designation

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

The Warden Cabin is strategically located within Banff National Park for backcountry travel in the Divide Pass between warden cabin destinations positioned at Clearwater Lake and the Red Deer River. With its adjacent round rail horse corral, the Divide Warden Cabin is an important and distinctive local landmark within an otherwise sparsely populated locality. Built of locally gathered materials, the cabin sits in a clearing of sub-alpine forest sloping down to Divide Creek, and facing the nearby mountain ranges. The broader surrounding landscape includes shrub thickets, larch and open spruce-fir forest. By its form, scale, construction and finishes, the Cabin is well integrated with, and reinforces, the park's wilderness character.

Small, simple and rectangular in form and characterised by its highly crafted, unadorned paint finished round-log construction, the Warden's Cabin is architecturally a fine very early example of a standard Number 3-type rustic one-room patrol cabin. This type, designed in 1918 and built thereafter, with minor variations, through to the 1960's, reflects the aesthetics favoured by National Parks in the west during the early-mid 20th century. The Cabin features eight-log high walls, saddle-notched at the corner ends, a low-pitched cedar shingle-finished roof projecting at the entrance elevation, supported on a round log constructed king-post truss, itself supported to either side on round vertical posts, to form a verandah over the entrance door.

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

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Clearwater Lakes Warden Cabin resides in its site relationships, overall form, scale, rustic design, round-log construction, details, materials and interior.

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The original setting and rustic character of the Cabin and its corral remains intact. Any future developments or landscape alterations should respect and maintain the visual and physical relationships with the open meadow, Divide Creek and the views of the surrounding mountains. The round log construction of both the cabin and corral contributes significantly to the site as a whole and is to be respected and maintained.

With its simple rectangular plan, massing and proportions, its cedar shingle-finished low pitched roof and gabled ends, the Divide Warden Cabin is characterised by its rustic crafted round-log wood construction and red-brown external paint finish with white painted windows and trim, and should be conserved. The high standard of workmanship should be matched in any future works. Feature elements, details and finishes should be respected, maintained and not altered. These include: the entrance gable elevation with its supporting poles and king-post truss structure, and the entrance door to one side counterbalanced by a small six-lite window; the verandah deck; the saddle-notched and trimmed logs at the corners; and the round posts and king post truss supporting the projecting roof. Chinking between logs should be maintained and repaired to match original detailing.

The Cabin's six-lite windows with their muntin bars, and wood plank door should be maintained and not altered or obscured. If replaced, new windows, door or elements should match originals in design, materials, finishes, workmanship and operation.

Internally, the Cabin retains its original function together with its volume, exposed paint-finished round log framing and walls, ceiling, milled plank flooring, wood trim, and stove, which should all be respected and maintained. If replaced, new components should match originals in dimension, materials, tooling, fixings, workmanship and finishes. Any new fixtures and fixed furnishings installed should be consistent with the rustic design character of the cabin and not alter the internal volume or obscure original finishes.

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