

Banff, Alberta
Information Building
(former Auditorium Building/School)
224 Banff Avenue

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Information Building was constructed by the Banff School District between 1939 and 1940 for school and community use. Designs were prepared by Engineering and Construction Services, Department of Mines and Resources. Its main user was the Banff School of Fine Arts. The building was purchased by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in 1966. In 1972 Parks Canada occupied the building and converted it to its present use as an information centre. Parks Canada is custodian of the building. See FHBRO Building Report 91-1 06.

Reason for Designation

The Information Building was designated Recognized because of its historical associations, its architectural quality and its importance in the Banff Avenue environment.

The building occupies a prominent location on Banff Avenue and is little altered since its completion in 1940.

Constructed as an auditorium and used by the Banff School of Fine Arts, one of Canada's notable cultural institutions, the building has important associations with the development of education and training in the arts during the 1930s. The building was the first purpose-built facility to be used by the school for classes and performances. It is also associated with the federal government's economic relief efforts in the 1930s as it was built with public funding provided under the Public Works Construction Administration.

The Information Building is also associated with the second period of the town of Banff's development during which it became established as a leading recreational centre.

The building is a good example of a building designed in the rustic, Tudor Revival style developed for national park buildings, and provides a link between the townsite and other park buildings. Its workmanship, and particularly its lime-stone rubble masonry, is competent.

Donald Cameron, director of the Banff School of Fine Arts from 1936 to 1969, is associated with the building.

.../2

-2-
Banff, Alberta
Information Building (Continued)

Character Defining Elements

The heritage value of the Information Building lies in those aspects of the design which relate to its use as a fine arts training facility, its rustic, Tudor Revival design and its contribution to the architectural character of Banff Avenue and the park as a whole.

The Information Building is a two-storey, rectangular-plan frame building with a cross-gable roof. The configuration of the roof, with a steep gable end facing Banff Avenue, and a cross-gable behind, gives the building a lower, more domestically scaled profile on that elevation. The remainder of the building is at a scale that is visually more substantial and institutional. This is due to the lower sloped roof and higher walls over much of its length.

Tudor Revival design elements distinguish the Information Building, and include the substantial use of rubble-stone and half-timbering with painted stucco infill, and prominent gables. Massive stone buttresses, with windows between, rise from the ground to the eave line. The exterior of the building has a high degree of historic integrity and should be carefully protected.

The main floor, although altered, remains a single major open space. This characteristic should be maintained.

The Information Building is compatible with its Banff Avenue setting with regard to form, scale and design.

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