

FHBRO Number 92-017

Longview, Alberta

Bunkhouse/Cookhouse (Building 11) FINAL

Bar U Ranch

The estimated construction date of the Bunkhouse/Cookhouse at the Bar U Ranch falls between 1909 and 1910. Its designer is unknown. Several alterations to the building took place during the 1940s and after 1950 including: the addition of a second rear wing transforming the 'L' plan to a square plan and replacing a shed-roofed verandah (around 1942); the replacement of original windows on the front and side walls with modern casement windows; the cutting of original fabric for the new window openings; and the recladding of the front façade with bevelled siding. The Bunkhouse/Cookhouse is a component of the Bar U Ranch National Historic Site. Parks Canada is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 92-17.

Reasons for Designation

The Bunkhouse/Cookhouse, as a component of the Bar U Ranch complex, was designated "Classified" because of the historical associations of this building and the ranch as a whole, because of the exceptional qualities of the site and setting, and because of its contribution to the overall aesthetic qualities of the complex.

The Bar U Ranch is strongly associated with the development of ranching in Alberta. Built to provide kitchen facilities, as well as accommodation for the ranch hands and the cook, the Bunkhouse/Cookhouse is associated with numerous events and people that contributed to this development. The structure is associated with George Lane, a prominent Alberta cattleman, who was hired at Bar U in 1884 to serve as the ranch foreman, and who ran the ranch between 1902 and 1925. The Bunkhouse/Cookhouse is also associated with Patrick Burns, who purchased the Bar U Ranch in 1927 to add to his vast cattle empire. Burns, who is recognized as the kingpin of the meat processing industry in western Canada during the mid-1920s, has been designated a person of national significance.

The building was constructed around the same time as the Stud and Mare-Horse Barns, in conjunction with the ranch's horse breeding program. The building's size provides evidence of the Bar-U Ranch's status as a large scale ranching operation.

As part of a cohesive complex of buildings arranged to great functional effect in a simple and beautiful natural setting, the Bunkhouse/Cookhouse contributes significantly to the character of the Bar U Ranch. The structure remains on its original site within the community centre, a flat grassy area on the south side of the main access lane, directly across from the row of three storage sheds to which it functionally related. Its site is the physical core of the historical Bar U complex. Its central location and comparatively large scale express the Bunkhouse/Cookhouse's importance on the ranch.

It is also a component of the collection of pre-1927 buildings which contribute to the

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landmark value of the complex as one of the region's most important early ranch sites. This landmark value is reinforced by the designation of the complex as a National Historic Site.

A major structure on the site, the Bunkhouse/Cookhouse building is the product of a simple, function-oriented design and yet has a strong aesthetic impact due to its scale, massing and patina. Like other buildings from the second wave of development at the ranch, the Bunkhouse/Cookhouse reflects the gradual shift from log building tradition using native material, to a reliance on external sources for form, structural design and building materials.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Bunkhouse/Cookhouse resides in its form, massing, scale, design, construction materials, remaining original exterior finish, interior hardware and features, and setting.

The Bunkhouse/Cookhouse has unusual massing in comparison with the majority of the buildings on the site, consisting of a gable-roofed, two-storey main section oriented parallel to the access lane, with a large one-storey shed-roofed rear extension running the full width of the building. This rear portion was originally half the width of the building; the enlargement replaced an original verandah. The two sections of the rear extension share a common roof-line and appear as one continuous structure across the back façade. The overall impression of the massing is a modified "saltbox" form. Chimneys and a rear dormer are important roof elements. The footprint and the roofline of the building should be respected in any intervention.

The Bunkhouse/Cookhouse's construction materials and finishes contribute to the visual cohesiveness within the site. All exterior walls, excluding the front façade, are clad with cove siding similar to the siding used on the Stud-Horse Barn. The original colour scheme of the Bunkhouse/Cookhouse (barn red walls and white trim) keeps with tradition across the Prairies. The roof's milled shingles also match other buildings on the site. All of these features contribute to the building's heritage character and should be protected in any future modifications or maintenance work.

Several alterations detract from the original character of the building and from its visual cohesiveness within the site, including the replacement of original windows on the front and side walls with casement windows, and the re-sheathing of the front wall with bevelled siding. When work is required for these components, the heritage character of the building and of the ranch would be enhanced by returning to the early design and materials.

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Any development should seek to retain the functional quality of the site and respect existing patterns of access and circulation. Any changes to circulation or access should consider historic patterns. The remains of a former vegetable garden located behind the kitchen wing should be retained and enhanced. The prominent setting of the Bunkhouse/Cookhouse and its relationship to the three storage sheds across the lane are important to the building's heritage character.

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

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