

FHBRO Number 92-017

Longview, Alberta

Foreman Pearson's House (Building 22) *FINAL*

Bar U Ranch

Foreman Pearson's House was built during the Bar U Ranch's second phase of development between 1909 and 1920, and moved to its present location from its original position, on what is now the site of the Poultry Shed, in the 1920s. The house was also enlarged with a back addition at approximately this same era. The Foreman Pearson's House 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

Foreman Pearson's House, as a component of the Bar U Ranch complex, was designated "Classified" because of the historical associations of this building and of 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. As part of the Bar U complex, Foreman Pearson's House is associated with numerous events and people that contributed to this development. Although smaller than the ranch manager's house, it served the important role of housing the ranch foreman and his family. The ranch foreman was responsible for directing most of the operations at the ranch when the owner-manager was not on site. This role was particularly important at the Bar U, considering the frequent absences of both George Lane and Patrick Burns during their respective periods of ownership. Pearson was the ranch foreman in the 1920s. This building, and the earlier log version of it, illustrate typical living accommodations on the ranch during its first and second phases of development.

As part of a cohesive complex of buildings arranged to great functional effect in a simple and beautiful natural setting, Foreman Pearson's House contributes significantly to the character of the Bar U Ranch. The building sits in a flat, grassy field, flanked on the north by a cottonwood grove and Pekisko Creek, and on the west by an open field, possibly the original polo field. Foreman Pearson's House is the key structure within the management and residential area, where the ranch's first buildings were constructed. This area on the western end of the complex became the ranch's residential area by 1892, when operational activities focused around the two log barns and bunkhouses in a zone to its East. In 1927, the residential area contained the manager's house and three smaller houses, including Pearson's. By 1930, after the manager's house was destroyed by fire, houses in the residential area were reorganized and Foreman Pearson's House was moved to its current position.

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

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as a National Historic Site.

The building is the product of a simple, function-oriented design and yet has a strong aesthetic impact in keeping with the overall utilitarian character of the ranch. It is characteristic of the simple, utilitarian houses built on ranches in Alberta prior to 1950.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of Foreman Pearson's House resides in the building's massing and design; in its simple detailing and the vernacular nature of its materials and construction; in the history and evolution of its usage as evoked by interior services, features, layout and fixtures; in the evidence of evolution and changing concepts of interior space and services; and in the functional quality of its siting.

The house has simple massing and an overall utilitarian design which is visible through its form, materials and detailing. Beginning as a modest, one-storey box with four rooms, a back porch and a front verandah, enlargements were made at the rear, presumably in the 1920s, providing the building with a new kitchen, bathroom and additional unidentified area. Although the additions blend well with the original construction through matching windows and sheathing, divisions are clearly perceivable in the siding break on the east wall and in the settlement of the additions. Any evidence of previous installations and forms should be retained to respect the evolutionary nature of the building.

The house's exterior walls are sheathed with narrow tapered siding, covering light frame stud walls and previous shiplap siding. Its T-shaped gable roof was originally clad with cedar shingles, which are visible behind the deteriorating asphalt shingles now covering them. A brick chimney projects from the center of the roof, connecting to a central oil stove. All of these features contribute to the building's heritage character and should be protected in any future modifications or repair work.

Constructed entirely of commercially milled lumber, the cabin sits on an excavated concrete foundation. The building's colour scheme (barn red walls and white trim) continues a tradition across the Prairies and matches other buildings on the site.

Foreman Pearson's House is an important visual focal point on the site, notably within its particular zone. It is also surrounded by several landscape features including rows of mature poplar trees, overgrown shrubbery, vestiges of former gardens and a concrete flagpole base. A driveway and turn-around to the building's east complete the existing lane that runs through the headquarters site. Any development should respect existing patterns of access and circulation. Any changes to circulation or access should

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consider historic patterns. Relationships between Foreman Pearson's House and its environment are important to the building's heritage character and to the ranch's historic depiction. They should be respected in any future use of the site.

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

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