

FHBRO Number 92-017

Longview, Alberta

**Harness Shop (Building 6)*****FINAL***

Bar U Ranch

The Harness Shop at the Bar U Ranch was built in 1909-10, part of the second phase of building between ca.1902-05 and the 1940s. Alterations to the building itself are minimal, however the building had been moved from its original site to another location on the Ranch by 1930. The Harness Shop 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 Harness Shop, 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. The Harness Shop provided a tack repair and storage facility, and served as a workshop and storage area throughout the ranch’s operational years. The structure is also 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. Finally, the Harness Shop is 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.

As part of a cohesive complex of buildings arranged to great functional effect in a simple and beautiful natural setting, the Harness Shop contributes significantly to the character of the Bar U Ranch. Located in the community centre, focused on Pekisko Creek, the building is part of a cohesive group of buildings lining the north side of the access lane within its area. It 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 as a National Historic Site.

The product of a simple, function-oriented design, the Harness Shop nevertheless has a strong aesthetic impact that combines with adjacent buildings to contribute to the overall character of the Bar U Ranch.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of the Harness Shop resides in the utilitarian nature of its materials and construction, its design, its exterior finishes, the history of its use as evoked by its interior layout and features, and its setting.

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The Harness Shop has a simple, rectangular footprint and a medium-pitched gable roof with two dormers on the south slope. The long narrow plan accommodates the two-bay arrangement at the interior, which separates the building into two related but separate functional areas. The colour scheme (barn red walls and white trim) keeps with tradition across the Prairies and visually links the Harness Shop to other buildings on site.

Commercially milled lumber is employed for the walls, which are built of light frame construction. The exterior walls are clad with beveled siding, with shiplap at the interior. The gabled roof, covered with cedar shingles, is pierced with dormer windows on the front slope. These are believed to be part of the original design. All of these features contribute to the building's heritage character and should be protected in any future modifications or maintenance work.

The Harness Shop's interior layout and equipment provide evidence of the building's original purpose. An eave-height partition, placed across the width of the building, divides the interior into two spaces. The westernmost space is an open storage area, accessible by a sliding door through which harness would be handed out or taken in. The absence of a ceiling takes advantage of natural light entering the interior through the window in the gable end and the dormer window above.

The enclosed space to the east of the partition served as a tack shop. Some original furnishings and effects remain in this space, including a work bench, stove, numerous harnesses, and other related objects.

The layout, features and remaining original objects in the Harness Shop express its original function and merit retention.

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.

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

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