

FHBRO Number 92-017

Longview, Alberta

Piggery (Building 31)***FINAL***

Bar U Ranch

The Piggery at the Bar U Ranch was part of the second phase of building (ca. 1902-05 to the 1940s) and was built before 1927, although its exact date of construction is unknown, as is the designer. The Piggery 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 Piggery, as a component of the Bar U Ranch complex, was designated “Classified” because of its historical associations, its functional design and aesthetic qualities, and its environmental values.

The Piggery is associated with the development of ranching in Alberta. The Piggery’s specialized design reflects George Lane’s enthusiasm for progressive agricultural technologies. It helped elevate George Lane’s reputation as a leading Canadian rancher and contributed to the Bar U Ranch’s status as an important ranching operation. The Piggery 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 illustrates significant structural changes that took place in the livestock industry during the first decades of the 20th century, which included improved agricultural methods and diversified farming in western Canada. The Piggery’s unornamented, functional design is characteristic of the buildings erected at the Bar U Ranch.

As part of a cohesive complex of buildings arranged to great functional effect in a simple and beautiful natural setting, the Piggery contributes to the overall character of the Bar U Ranch. The Piggery, along with the Self-Feeder and Livestock Shed, is situated on the south bank of Pekisko Creek, screened by a cottonwood grove and the eastern slope of the valley. 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.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Piggery resides in its design, massing, pattern and type of openings, construction materials, exterior finishes, interior features and setting.

The Bar U Piggery belongs to the “large house with individual pen class”, one of the

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two most general classes of piggery design used in North America in the first quarter of the 20th century. It is a sophisticated example of light milled frame design for structures of this type at the time of its construction. The Piggery has distinctive massing, with its two long shed-roofed rows of 12 timber-floored pens facing a wide, earthen-floored central feed aisle. The roofline of one bay extends across the corridor to create a clerestory level with 12 windows that provide natural light for the feed aisle. Each pen has a low entry door with a vertically-sliding panel that allowed free access to the outside pig run that formerly flanked the sides of the building. The north façade's pig pen has a door and each south façade pen has a door and a window. All of these features reflect state-of-the-art conditions for pig raising and contribute to the heritage character of the building.

Chosen construction materials and techniques also contribute to the building's visual cohesiveness within the site and to its utilitarian character. The structure sits on a concrete foundation. The Piggery's horizontal plank roof deck is covered with cedar shingles and supported by a beam and post system. Three ventilators with doors provide adjustable ventilation for the building. The exterior walls are sheathed with shiplap while the inside of the exterior walls are unlined, exposing the rough sawn framing and the random width, rough sawn, spaced board sheathing. The Piggery's colour scheme continues a tradition across the Prairies and visually links it to the other buildings on site. Original materials and techniques are important to the building's character, provide evidence of earlier construction methods and should be respected.

At the interior, each stall was fitted with a movable front panel along the aisle side and fenders along the movable partition walls. Partitions were prevented from accidentally lifting by turn buttons mounted on the feed aisle column and outer wall stud. A numbering system, which is still visible, was used to assist in returning partitions to their respective locations. Remnants of a whitewash finish is visible in some areas of the interior.

Remaining features relating to the building's use as a piggery should be protected, such as the stovepipe hole in the roof, the well opening between partitions 16 and 17, the front panels and partitions, the partition numbering system, and all remaining feed troughs and feed bins.

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 related to the movement of animals, workers, grain tanks, wagons and motorized vehicles. The remnants of the exterior pig run should be retained and the barbed wire fence north of the Piggery reinstated to its previous height and line. The Piggery's relationship to the Self-Feeder and Livestock Shed, and its

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remote setting are important to its heritage character and should be protected.

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

2000.03.27