

FHBRO Number 92-017

Longview, Alberta

Work Horse Barn (Building 17) FINAL

Bar U Ranch

The Work Horse Barn at the Bar U Ranch was built after the Saddle Horse Barn, as part of the first group of buildings, between 1883 and 1892. Its exact date of construction is not known. The building has undergone some modifications over the years to meet changing needs, including the addition of a section to its west side for grain storage before 1916 and the installation of a sling for lifting hay into the loft at the south end. The building continues to be used for horse accommodation. The Work Horse Barn 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 Work Horse Barn, 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 functional design and contribution to the overall aesthetic qualities of the complex.

The Bar U Ranch is strongly associated with the development of ranching in Alberta. The Work Horse Barn is associated with this development as the largest and earliest log structures constructed on the site, and is an important component of the Bar U. Constructed between 1883 and 1892, the Work Horse Barn 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 Work Horse Barn 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.

A major building on the site, the Work Horse Barn is the product of a simple, function-oriented design and yet has a strong aesthetic impact due to its scale, massing and patina. An excellent example of its type, it served to define this type of working building on a foothills ranch. It is an impressive size for a building of log construction. The moulded concrete veneer, present at the original section’s north façade, replicates a horizontal, round log surface with knots and graining, is a unique feature and has made the building well known throughout the region. The Bar U brand is emblazoned on the east slope of the roof and further raises the building’s profile. The many modifications it has undergone testify to the practical approach of the ranch’s managers and to the flexibility of the buildings themselves.

As part of a cohesive complex of buildings arranged to great functional effect in a simple and beautiful natural setting, the Work Horse Barn contributes significantly to the

character of the Bar U Ranch. The structure is associated with the corral to its east,

The interior of the original section of the Work Horse Barn contains ten standing stalls, two box stalls, a feed room and a tack room. A loft above was used for hay storage

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and is located immediately south of the main road and west of the Saddle Horse Barn. It is a component of the historical grouping, within the community centre, that served as the engine of the overall ranch operation. The grouping strongly complements the Pekisko Creek valley grassland and valley ridge on which it is located.

The Work Horse Barn 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 Work Horse Barn resides in its massing, construction techniques and materials, unique features, exterior finish, interior features and layout and setting.

The Work Horse Barn has two sections: the original two-storey log building with a gabled roof and the one-storey light-frame addition with a shed roof to its west. The walls of the original section consist of round logs with squared dovetail-notched corners. The logs used for the Work Horse Barn are larger in dimension than those used for other buildings on the site. The longitudinal walls are two log-lengths long, and are joined by being mortised into an upright log. The original section rests on a dry-laid sandstone foundation, later reinforced with concrete. The roof is built with pole rafters supported with purlins and queen posts, and it is covered with milled cedar shingles. A projecting peak was added at the south end of the roof ridge when the sling was introduced, to carry and shelter the mechanism. Two unusual features that add character to the building are the Bar U brand, which is stenciled on both roof slopes, and the moulded concrete veneer on the north façade that replicates a log wall. All these features are character-defining and merit protection. Any changes should be predicated on an understanding of the development of the building and its periods of significance.

The shed-roofed addition increased the stable area by approximately one third. This section rests on a concrete foundation. There is no finished floor, instead the area is surfaced with river stone. Its roof consists of light frame wood rafters, supported on one end by the original section's roof rafters, by a stud wall at the opposite end and by an intermediate purlin. The addition's roof is also covered with milled cedar shingles. Remaining interior features merit preservation.

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and is accessed by a small staircase. The addition is divided into three rooms.

Any clues to the Work Horse Barn's evolution should be protected, including evidence of additions and modifications, existing hardware, barn articles, wear marks and patina.

Development should seek to retain the functional quality of the site and respect existing patterns of access and circulation. The relationships of the Work Horse Barn to the Saddle Horse Barn, the corral, the Blacksmith Shop, the main access road and to other structures of the community centre are important to its heritage character and should be protected. Any changes to circulation or access should consider historic patterns related to the movement of pedestrians, horses, grain tanks, wagons and motorized vehicles.

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

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