

**FHBRO HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT
GLACIER CIRCLE ALPINE HUT, BRITISH COLUMBIA (00-18) / PAGE 1**

FHBRO number: **00-18**
DFRP Number: **18752**
Resource name: **Glacier Circle Alpine Hut**
Address: **Glacier National Park, British Columbia**
Construction: **1922 (Canadian Pacific Railway), restored in 1972 by Alpine Club of Canada with support from Parks Canada**
Original function: **Temporary shelter for climbing expeditions**
Current function: **Overnight destination and emergency shelter**
Custodian: **Parks Canada Agency**
FHBRO status: **'Recognized' Federal Heritage Building**

Reasons for designation

The Glacier Circle Alpine Hut is a 'Recognized' Federal Heritage Building because of its historical, architectural, and environmental values:

Historical value: The Glacier Circle Alpine Hut is associated with the development of the Canadian Rockies for tourism and alpine recreation based on the model of the Swiss Alps. It is also a testimony to the pioneering roles of the Swiss Guides, who played a key role in the popularization of alpine climbing in British Columbia and Alberta and who introduced the concept of alpine shelter huts, and the Canadian Pacific Railway, which constructed the first series of huts, including the Glacier Circle Hut, at strategic locations close to popular climbing areas. Finally, it is associated with the Alpine Club of Canada (ACC), which since 1906 has organized alpine excursions and related activities, and in 1972 undertook the restoration of the Glacier Circle Hut (1922), and the oldest surviving backcountry shelter cabin in the Glacier National Park.

Architectural value: The Glacier Circle Hut, a typical example of rustic Canadian alpine huts of its day, is a modest, mostly hand-crafted vernacular structure built mainly of materials found near its remote mountain site. It is a small (5.2 x 4.5 metres) spruce log construction with saddle-notched corners, a porch extension and a gable roof covered with hand-split wood shingles. It has two small windows on each of its side walls. Due to its deteriorated condition after decades of abandonment, its 1972 restoration and upgrade, specifically the overhanging porch extension, poles and new window, was extensive but respected the overall intentions of the original design.

Environmental value: The Alpine Hut reinforces its extremely remote mountain setting in the midst of a forest glade within a natural bowl known as the Glacier Circle. It is a landmark that is well-known to the climbers and skiers who use it as an overnight destination and shelter.

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Character-defining Elements

The following character-defining elements of the Glacier Circle Alpine Hut should be respected:

Its role as an illustration of the pioneering roles of the Swiss Guides, the Canadian Pacific Railway, and the Alpine Club of Canada in the development of the Rockies for tourism and recreation:

- The inscriptions marking ascents and the names of Swiss Guides and others, which are carved, written, and nailed on the interior of the log walls.

Its rustic and rudimentary design, its good craftsmanship, and its appropriate use of materials:

- Its modest scale.
- Its rectangular form surmounted by a gable roof, with a minimal number of small windows.
- Its carefully hand-crafted construction of locally-cut spruce logs, assembled with saddle-notched corners and peeled spruce primary structural components, its foundation of boulders, and its hand-split shingle roof covering.
- Its simple functional design and interior layout.
- The features of its 1972 interior and exterior upgrades by the ACC, including the loft and porch extension.

Its compatibility with its remote, natural surroundings:

- Its status as a landmark that is part of a network of isolated overnight destinations and shelters known to the skiers and climbers who use the park.
- Its comfortable relationship - due to its modest scale, its local materials, and its rustic detailing - with its natural context, a forest glade within a natural bowl located in the Columbia Mountains.

For guidance on interventions, refer to the *FHBRO Code of Practice*. For further information, contact FHBRO.

March 2002