

**94-10**

Jasper, Alberta  
**Former Canadian National Railways Station**  
Jasper National Park

## **HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

The former Canadian National Railways (CNR) station at Jasper was built in 1925 by the line's Western Division crews, to designs prepared by the CNR Architectural Division in Winnipeg. It has been renovated to serve as a restaurant. See FHBRO Building Report 94-10.

### **Reasons for Designation**

The former CNR station at Jasper was designated Classified for its architectural, environmental and historical significance.

The station was built to an unusual design that adapted the Arts and Crafts style and the related rustic theme in Parks architecture to the specific functional requirements of a first-class facility for rail travel. In keeping with those stylistic influences, its irregular massing, rustic materials and robust detailing relate to its park setting. Much of the interior finish and detail is concealed by later materials, but remains in place.

The station is an important local landmark and a focal point in the plan of the Jasper townsite. It was one of the largest and finest stations to be built by the new Canadian National Railways immediately after its formation. Appropriately, its expansive site encompassed the previous locations of both the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway and the Canadian Northern Railway depots, which had been built to serve luxury resort facilities in one of Canada's earliest national parks.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of the Jasper station resides in its exterior form, materials and detailing, in features of its Arts and Crafts and rustic design, in the quality of its original interior finishes, and in its site and setting.

The station is characterized by its picturesque, asymmetrical massing and prominent, complex roofline. The central hipped portion has paired asymmetrical gabled dormers flanking central shed dormers, while the wings at each end have truncated hipped dormers. Large cobblestone chimneys contribute to the interest of the roofline. The irregular massing and roofline are integral to the building's design and should not be compromised. Consideration should be given to the reversal of later alterations, such

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**Former Canadian National Railways Station** (Continued)

as reinstatement of the original porte-cochère through which one entered the general waiting room from the town side.

The materials and their arrangement on the station are also representative of the rustic approach to design adopted in the national parks. The exterior walls have a cobblestone veneer base, a limestone drip course, and stuccoed brick walls above. Original multi-pane wood windows with storms, wooden soffits and fascias, and other wood trim elements are generally extant and contribute to the rustic appearance. Careful maintenance is required to ensure the continuing preservation of these surfaces and features. Modern single-light replacement windows lack the texture of the originals, and should be replaced with units compatible with the original design when they are at the end of their service life. Because colour is an important element in the rustic aesthetic, historic paint analysis should be used to determine original colours for future repainting. The asphalt shingle roof is incompatible with the building's vocabulary of texture and natural materials, and consideration should be given to its replacement with cedar shingles when reroofing is required.

The interior was designed using the same architectural vocabulary as the exterior, and was notable for its fine public spaces with heavy beamed ceilings, exposed trusswork, rough plaster finishes, elegant light fixtures, and built-in furnishings. These elements are still visible in the main waiting room and merit careful conservation. Elsewhere, many original elements are hidden. Exposing and restoring these elements, particularly in public spaces, would enhance the interior. Other areas originally had simpler trim and detailing which should also be retained as part of the original building fabric.

The building remains a prominent landmark within Jasper because of its scale, its design, and its function. Height restrictions on neighbouring buildings have been used successfully to maintain this prominence. Although automobile traffic has altered some of the patterns of access and increased the need for parking, the station retains vestiges of its historic landscape setting in areas such as the totem pole and the adjacent stand of trees. These should be retained. Any further redevelopment of the site should be based on a detailed study of the gardens and other original landscape features, and proposed changes should take the results of that study into account.

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