

**90-235**

Waterton Lakes, Alberta

**Interpretive Building**

Waterton Lakes National Park

**HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

The Waterton Lakes National Park Interpretive Building was constructed as a multi-purpose community facility in 1926, with an addition in 1928 doubling its size. It was designed by W.D. Cromarty of the Town planning and Architectural Division of the Dominion Parks Branch. Alterations in 1936 and 1961 included siding replacement and simplification of the exterior detailing. Parks Canada is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 90-235.

**Reasons for Designation**

The Interpretive Building (originally the Community Building) was designated Recognized because of its environmental significance and its architectural design, and also for its historical associations.

The Interpretive Building is prominent because of its waterfront proximity and large scale within the simple setting. The materials - log siding, exposed rafters and log posts - are appropriate to the setting and continue the picturesque Rustic style used to create a unified image for the national parks.

The Interpretive Building is part of the Waterton Lake townsite campground and illustrates the theme of automobile-accessible campground development in Canada. Waterton Lakes National Park was one of the first national parks to develop a series of facilities for park visitors. The Interpretive Building was the first community building and the only facility (after the 1928 alterations) combining residential, administrative and social functions under one roof.

**Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of the Interpretive Building resides in its form and proportions, in features of the picturesque Rustic style design, and in site relationships.

The building is a single-storey gabled hip-roofed structure with an off-center fieldstone chimney and symmetrically placed doors and windows. The "T" shaped footprint, the roof profile and the simple form of the building should be maintained.

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**Interpretive Building**

Waterton Lakes National Park (Continued)

The original design featured log slab siding, cedar shingles, exposed rafter tails, and peeled log framing at entrance canopies. The 1960s alterations introduced beveled siding, asphalt roof shingles, and finished fascias over the rafter tails, and eliminated the detailing on the front and side entrance hoods. The chimney has also been reconstructed, altering the original rustic character. Consideration should be given to returning to the original rustic materials and detailing. The original drawings show fieldstone-faced foundations, which may survive beneath the current parged finish, and if so should be exposed.

The multi-pane casement wood windows, arranged in groups of two and three, are in keeping with the design intent and should be retained. Early photographs show that the original door was paneled and glazed. The current slab door lacks the level of detail intended in the original design. When the door is to be replaced, the new one should reflect the original design intent.

The multi-purpose five-room layout dating from 1928 should be maintained. Extant original interior finishes and surviving details should be preserved and maintained during future rehabilitations.

The adjacent simple and open landscape is in keeping with the character of the building. The axial approach to the entrance, with concrete walkway and steps, should be maintained.

96.07.25

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