

87-1 04

Ottawa, Ontario

Sheep Showcase/Small Dairy Barn (#95)

Central Experimental Farm

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Small Dairy Barn was built in 1912 to a design prepared by the Animal Husbandry Division of the Central Experimental Farm. External modifications include a new pattern of windows at the south end (pre-1937), the boarding-up of doors to the wash-room and milk room (c. 1960) and the demolition of the silo (1937-1946). Internal modifications include two new intermediate floors at the south end with their attendant partitions and stairs (pre-1937) the partitioning of various rooms on the hay floor (c. 1960) and the construction of a loft floor over the same rooms, accessible by a single stair. The building is currently (1989) under the care of Public Works Canada. See FHBRO Building Report 87-1 04.

Reason for Designation

On February 5, 1988, the Small Dairy barn was designated Recognized by the evaluation committee because of the important historical themes with which it is associated, the aesthetically pleasing and functionally efficient qualities of its design, and the care and attention evident in the handling of its building fabric.

The Dairy Barn illustrates very well the government initiatives undertaken between 1910 and 1920 in scientific livestock improvement and hygienic milk production.

Architecturally it represents a classic example of the dairy barn design, developed in the mid-west United States at the end of the 19th century.

When built in 1912, the barn housed 24 milk cows and had provision for carrying out experiments on the digestibility of food stuffs. By the 1970s these activities had been transferred elsewhere, leaving the barn empty. In recent years the building was used by the Agricultural Engineering Institute for stress tests on barn trusses.

The heritage character of this building resides primarily in its resemblance to the "Wisconsin barn" type. Such features as the gambrel roof, the trussed rafters, the large and numerous windows and the original stable layout are characteristic of this barn type.

The building is a model of dairying theory and practice followed in the first years of this century.

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Character Defining Elements

One of the reasons for its construction, given in the annual report of 1912-1913, is "to stand as a good type of complete modern barn construction as to capacity, strength and lightness of structure, durability, capacity, convenience, light and ventilation, and in which both healthy cattle and pure milk may be produced." The physical remains of the waste disposal system (litter carrier, gutters, etc.) feed distribution systems (feed passage, hay track, hay chute, etc.), the ventilation system (ventilator boxes, foul-air outlets, roof turrets, etc.) are testimony to the innovative planning and equipment that were part of the original design.

From an aesthetic point of view the symmetrical and regular placement of window and door openings, the archetypal barn roof shape, and the compact and simple building mass contribute to the success of the design.

A portion of the heritage character derives from the presence of certain finishes and features found on other Central Experimental Farm buildings, chosen by the designers to better integrate the building into the total architectural ensemble. Such finishes as the vertically battened siding, and purged concrete foundation wall, such features as the square roof turret, and the pointed extensions to the roof at each gable end (cover and support for the hay carrier) reinforce the commonality of the various farm buildings.

In 1988 the barn was rehabilitated for use as a sheep showcase. The continued use of the building for animal husbandry would place the least demands on the building fabric both on the exterior and interior.

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