

Heritage Character Statement

The Rescue Building, formerly the Information Centre, was built in 1949 as a tourist information bureau with public lavatory facilities. In 1972, the structure was modified to serve its current function as a storage facility for rescue equipment. The washrooms remain open during the summer months. Parks Canada is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 90-306.

Reasons for Designation

The Rescue Building was designated Recognized as a result of its association with increased automobile tourism after the Second World War; its embodiment of the established National Park design motif; and its contribution to the historic streetscape.

In the early part of the century, lack of access roads meant that visitors to Jasper usually arrived by train. Park information was provided at the train station and at the Administration building located nearby. Completion of the Banff-Jasper and Yellowhead highways significantly increased park visitation in the 1940s, and created the need for a separate information bureau.

The designers of the building, the Engineering and Construction division of the Lands and Services Branch, chose to respect the rustic theme established in the 1920s for National Park buildings, despite a post-war trend away from this standard. As a result, the Rescue Building harmonizes with older landmark buildings in its vicinity.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Rescue Building is defined by its simple design, its massing, its materials, and its relationship to the historic streetscape.

The well-proportioned building of roughly cruciform plan consists of a rectangular, one-storey, hip-roofed structure with front and rear gable-roofed projections. In 1967, the projecting central section facing Connaught Drive was shortened to facilitate street widening, but the facade was reconstructed. The symmetrical placement of windows and doors on all facades contributes to a well-balanced composition.

The 1920s design motif is reflected in the use of stone cladding, half-timbered gables, multi-paned casement windows, scalloped fascia boards, and stone fireplace and chimney; these characteristic elements should be carefully preserved. The central section of the building served originally as the information centre, but is now used to

.../2

store rescue equipment. As a result, the windows surrounding the front door have been covered with plywood and the original multi-paned front doors replaced by solid core doors. If use permits, these original features should be reinstated. Original interior features and finishes should be identified and retained.

The Rescue Building, a local landmark, reinforces the heritage character of its environment which includes the adjacent 1925 hip-roofed railway station, the 1913 fieldstone administration building, and the 1928 fieldstone and half-timbered bank building. The landscaped setting of the Rescue Building should be protected from development to preserve its relationships within this enclave of historic structures.

1994.09.12