

FHBRO HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT HALFWAY HUT, BANFF NATIONAL PARK, AB

FHBRO number: **99-138**
DFRP number: **15404**
Resource name: **Halfway Hut**
Address: **Banff National Park, Alberta**
FHBRO status: **"Recognized" Federal Heritage Building**
Construction: **1931**
Designer: **Jim Boyce, a Banff log builder**
Original function: **Refuge and stopping place for skiers**
Current function: **Day shelter**
Modifications: **Three lower logs on exterior walls replaced, new wood shingle roof, purlins and pole rafters installed (1980s); new window surrounds, roof decking, entry door and wood plank floor (1983)**
Custodian: **Parks Canada**

Reasons for Designation

The Halfway Hut is a "Recognized" Federal Heritage Building because of its historical associations, and its architectural and environmental values:

Historical value:

The Halfway Hut is associated with the early development of winter recreation in Canada's National Parks, and the development of alpine skiing in the Lake Louise region of Banff National park. The establishment of the Skoki Ski Lodge as an alpine skiing destination marked the beginning of winter recreation in the area. Considered as a significant adjunct to this development, the Halfway Hut was constructed at the mid-way point on the uphill trail to the CPR station at Lake Louise and the Skoki Ski Lodge to provide overnight shelter for ski tourists en route to the Skoki Ski Lodge.

Architectural value:

The half way Hut is a simple, well-proportioned, rectangular log structure with a gable roof supported on log rafters and purlins, a deep overhang above the cabin entrance and simple four-light windows centered on the side and rear walls. The interior of the cabin consists of a single room with no interior partitions, a wood plank floor, and unfinished walls. Constructed of natural, local materials, the half way Hut is a well-crafted log shelter and is a good example of the rustic style of architecture.

Environmental value:

The Halfway Hut is located on a level, grass covered shelf, surrounded by a narrow band of mature spruce trees in the picturesque setting of the Ptarmigan Valley. The Halfway Hut is a well known landmark within the community of skiers and hikers and currently functions as a day shelter.

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Character-Defining Elements

The following character-defining elements of the Halfway Hut should be respected:

Its role as an illustration of the early development of winter recreation in Canada's National Parks, and the development of alpine skiing in the Lake Louise region of Banff National Park is reflected in:

- the building's rustic aesthetic which was part of the architectural character of Canada's national park facilities from the 1880s until the end of the Second World War.

Its rustic style, indigenous building methods and local materials as manifested in:

- the simple, well-proportioned and solidly built rectangular cabin which features a medium-pitch gable roof supported by large log rafters and purlins, a deep overhang above the cabin entrance, horizontal log construction and simple, four-light windows;
- the use of natural, local materials consistent with the principles of rustic architecture such as the horizontally laid peeled log construction, boulder foundation, and wood shingle roof; and,
- the well-executed rustic detailing such as the saddle-notched corners, exposed log rafters and purlins and strip wood chinking.

The manner in which the building reinforces the picturesque character of the setting as evidenced in:

- the retention of its relationship with the site, in particular its location on a level, grass covered shelf above the junction of two creeks, surrounded by a narrow band of mature spruce trees and adjacent to a hiking trail which runs along its eastern side; and,
- the compatibility of the building's rustic form, natural materials and rustic detailing with the picturesque wilderness setting of the Ptarmigan Valley's alpine meadows and mountain peaks.

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

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