

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT
FHBRO Number 99-142
Churchill, Manitoba
VIA Rail / CNR Station

The Churchill VIA Rail / Canadian National Railways (CNR) Station was constructed in 1929-30. It was designed by the CNR's Architectural Division. Minor modifications have occurred to the interior layout. The building is currently used as a passenger railway station. Parks Canada Agency is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 99-142.

Reasons for Designation

The Churchill VIA Rail / CNR Station has been designated "Recognized" because of its environmental significance, its importance as a work of architecture and also because of its historical associations.

The environmental significance of the Churchill VIA Rail / CNR Station resides in the integrity of the building's relationship to its site, and in its status as a determining feature in the layout and later development of the modern town of Churchill. The station contributes to the character created by the port and by grain elevators and other transportation-related and commercial structures in its environs. It also has landmark value as the first thing one sees upon arriving in Churchill by rail.

Architecturally, the Churchill VIA Rail / CNR Station is of considerable interest for its picturesque design and massing which reveal the influence of both late Queen Anne Revival and Arts and Crafts styles. The form and massing are at once distinctive and typical of Canadian railway architecture.

The construction of the Churchill VIA Rail / CNR Station, along with the associated rail and port facilities, signalled the beginning of a modern era of the middle north of Canada. This station represents the important role that the railways played in the development of the north. The building is a key landmark in the history of Churchill.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Churchill VIA Rail / CNR Station resides in its form, massing, materials and finishes, interior layout and site relationships.

The station is characterized by its horizontal emphasis, asymmetrical massing and prominent, complex roof line. The building's rectangular composition consists of a 1 1/2-storey main block with a two-storey projecting pavilion and a one-storey extension. With the exception of the two-storey pavilion, the building has a medium-pitch hipped

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roof with indented hipped dormers on the main block portion of the roof. The two-storey pavilion has a steeply pitched hipped roof. The roof of the one-storey portion of the station extends around the building to create wide bracketed eaves on the track side and over the street side entrance. The typical rectilinear footprint and the complex interplay of roof forms, dormers and deep eaves with brackets are important elements of the building's design which should be retained and protected.

The station is a wood-frame structure on a concrete foundation, clad in asbestos shingle siding which may be original to the building. The wooden banding applied to the base of the building not only protects the exterior walls of the station but also emphasizes the horizontal nature of the design. Contrasting colours may also have been an element of the picturesque design. The asymmetrical arrangement of the windows and doors reflects interior layout and functions. This is an important relationship that should be respected. The windows originally featured divided lights in the upper sashes, typical of Queen Anne Revival style influences. When new windows are required, the building's heritage character would be enhanced by the re-introduction of windows sympathetic with that design.

Inside, the manager's office, ticket counter and some of the wooden benches remain, and should be retained. Early wall and ceiling finishes may be obscured by overlay of new finishes and later work; future alterations should be preceded by investigation to identify historic fabric and provide for its protection.

The site of the Churchill VIA Rail / CNR Station consists of a platform on the track side, and parking lots and service yards on the other three sides. The utilitarian character of the site and the important relationship with the platform and tracks should be respected.

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

2000.09.08