

**FHBRO HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT
39 / RECREATION HALL, DUNDURN, SASKATCHEWAN**

FHBRO Number: 03-009
DFRP Number: 14121
Resource Name: 39 / Recreation Hall
Address: Dundurn Military Camp (CFD Dundurn), Dundurn, Saskatchewan
FHBRO Status: "Recognized" Federal Heritage Building
Construction: 1934
Designer: None identified
Original Function: Recreation facility
Current Function: Recreation facility
Modifications: A new roof and the installation of a new wood floor in the gymnasium.
Custodian: Department of National Defence

Description of Historic Place

The Recreation Hall is a large, utilitarian, two-and-one-half-storey, rectangular building, constructed primarily of concrete block. The main façade is symmetrical and it is divided into five bays, punctuated by applied buttresses in contrasting smooth-finished concrete. The three central, two-storey bays are topped with a gable roof, while the flanking single-storey wings have shed roofs. The building is distinctive in its context through its size and design. The designation is confined to the footprint of the building.

Heritage Value

The Recreation Hall is a "Recognized" Federal Heritage Building because of its historical associations, and its architectural and environmental values.

Historical value:

The Recreation Hall is a very good illustration of the Unemployment Relief Programme, a government response to the severe economic depression of the 1930's. The crisis was particularly severe in the western provinces. The programme was administered by the Department of National Defence and was designed to employ able-bodied, unmarried men on public works. The erection of this recreation facility speaks to the magnitude of the unemployment crisis in Saskatchewan. The Recreation Hall is also a very good example of the initial phase of the permanent establishment of CFD Dundurn, first as a working camp and later as a training base. The hall was specifically designed to provide year-round recreational activities for workers on relief.

Architectural value:

The Recreation Hall is a good, functional design, adapted from the 1912 Department of Militia and Defence Type B drill hall. The gable-roofed, central mass with its shed-roofed wings reflects the building's interior plan. Although very utilitarian in appearance, subtle detailing suggests a military character. As a recreation facility, the building's design clearly reflects the full range of services provided in the relief camp. Its materials were manufactured on site and well assembled by relief workers.

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Environmental value:

The Recreation Hall is the largest and most prominent of approximately 40 buildings constructed during the Unemployment Relief period at Dundurn camp, between 1933-34. It is a key element among the remaining buildings, as it reinforces the character of its surroundings through its size and design. The historical relationship between the Dundurn Recreation Hall and its associated landscape is consistent with the spartan character of the relief camp. Due to its role as a social and recreational centre, the Recreation Hall is a familiar building at CFD Dundurn and is frequently used by base dwellers and by the local community.

Character-Defining Elements

The following character-defining elements of the Recreation Hall should be respected:

Its good, straightforward and functional design and the expression of the large, interior volume in its massing, as illustrated in:

- The symmetrical composition of three central, two-storey bays with a gable roof, flanked by single-storey wings with shed roofs, directly corresponding to the large, interior central space of the gymnasium; and
- The regular pattern of fenestration, which also corresponds with interior functions.

The suggestion of military character as seen in decorative detailing, including:

- The contrasts of façade materials, notably the smooth-finished buttresses, sills, lintels and voussairs, and the roughly finished surface of the walls; and
- The round-arched doorways and flat-arched windows, all with accentuated keystones.

Its good functional design, which is well-suited for its intended purpose and has proven to be very adaptable over time, as evidenced in:

- The large, central gymnasium, which provides basic, adaptable space for a variety of group activities; and
- The stage overlooking the gymnasium and the surrounding series of low ceiling spaces, which are adaptable for smaller scale complementary uses.

The good quality of materials and craftsmanship, as manifested in:

- The roughly finished concrete blocks, which were manufactured on site and well-assembled by relief workers.

The visual links between the Recreation Hall and the remaining group of original Unemployment Relief camp buildings, as illustrated by:

- The massing and materials.

For guidance on interventions, please refer to the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*. For further information contact FHBRO.

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