

BEAR CREEK, Yukon
FHBRO Number: **89-08**
DFRP Number: **20008**
Root Cellar (Building #56)
Bear Creek Compound

The Root Cellar (Building #56) was constructed by the Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation (YCGC) in 1952 as long-term storage space for vegetables. It is part of the Bear Creek industrial complex, a service facility for the YCGC gold mining operations. Operations at the complex ceased in 1966, and the property was acquired by Parks Canada, its present custodian, in 1975.

Reasons for designation

The Root Cellar is a “Recognized” Federal Heritage Building because of its historical, architectural, and environmental values:

As part of the Bear Creek complex, the Root Cellar is one of the most recently constructed buildings associated with the corporate phase of Yukon’s gold mining history. It illustrates the development of community life at the complex because of its role in the local production and storage of root crops and potatoes as a food supply in this remote location.

The simple, functional design of the Root Cellar conforms to a pattern common in many places in Canada where root crops and tubers were produced in quantity and required long-term storage. The front elevation is unusual in shape and treatment, and enhances the visual quality of this otherwise utilitarian structure, most of which is concealed under a thick covering of earth. It is essentially a wooden retaining wall with a distinctive entrance door and a loading platform, beside which is small shed-roofed enclosure where tally sheets, tools, and other items such as sacks may have been kept. Two boxed ventilators project from the roof. Underneath its earth cover the Root Cellar is a stout rectangular timber building, with a single inner chamber and two rows of posts down the middle. A second door at the end of a short passage through the earth fill provides an air lock when combined with the front entry door. These features provide the storage chamber with easy access, controlled air circulation, and a stable temperature range. They also demonstrate good workmanship and appropriate use of materials.

Although its exterior appearance is different from the structures around it, the Root Cellar reinforces the industrial character of this functionally obsolete but remarkably intact village-like mining service facility, with its 80 structures and a number of landscape features typical of large-scale mechanical placer mining. Like the other main buildings on the site, its front gable is oriented towards the large open yard, although it is set back considerably from it.

Character-defining elements

The following character-defining elements of the Root Cellar should be respected:

- The simple and functional nature of its design, and its overall good workmanship and appropriate use of materials.
- Its unusual form and massing, including its distinctive front elevation, with the attached enclosure and loading dock, and its earth cover.
- The features that unify it with the site's other structures, including the rooftop ventilators, the wooden cladding of the front wall, and the main entrance door, with its diagonal boards and three prominent strap hinges.
- The connecting passage with its double-door airlock arrangement.
- The shape and configuration of its storage chamber, with its two rows of posts down the centre.
- Its comfortable relationship – due to its simple form, materials, detailing, and colour – with the other structures and landscape features of the site.

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

March 2002